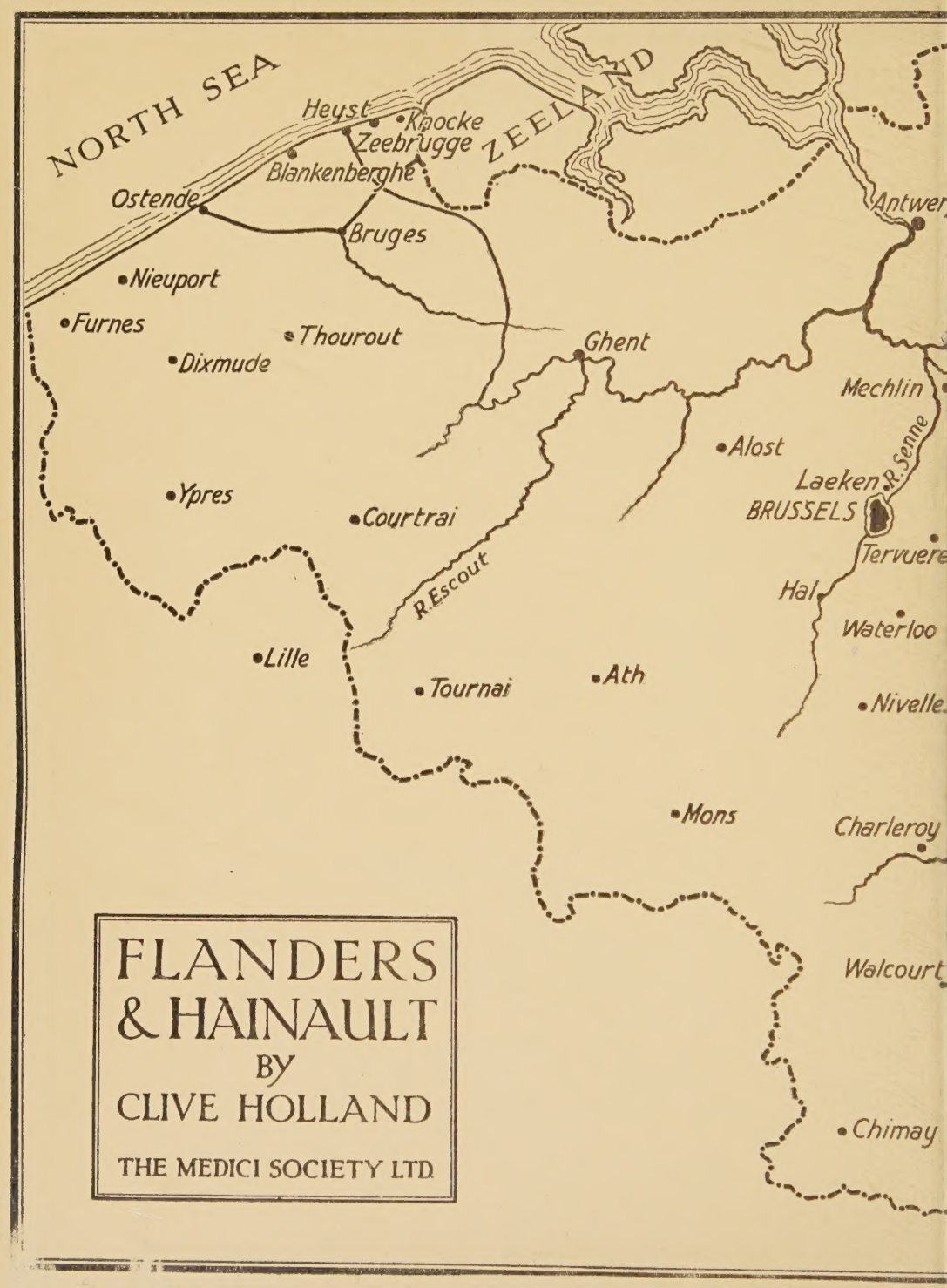

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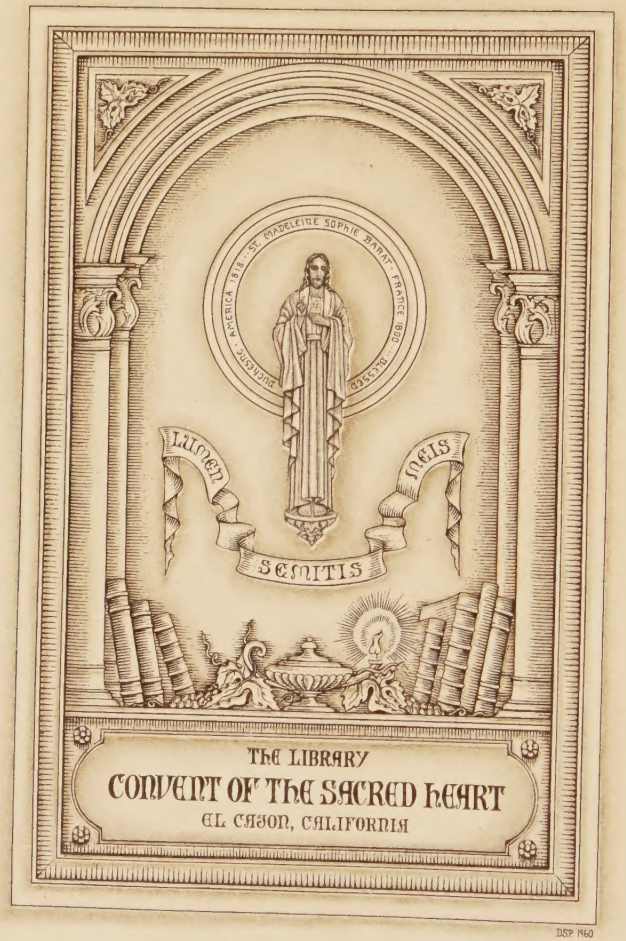
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TO

H. M. KING ALBERT, OF BELGIUM,

THIS BOOK IS,

WITH HIS GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

London, January 1925.

01284

In the forest of Soignes.

Ostend. The Sea front — Kursal by night

CHAPTER I

The Lure of Belgium. — The Sea Coast and its Towns.

Belgium has a lure peculiarly its own for the holiday maker and the student. The magnet for most of the former is the magnificent beaches or Plages which lie along the shores of the North Sea from Adinkerke-La Panne, on the western frontier, to Knocke just within the eastern border; for the latter, the ancient cities of Belgium, of which many happily remain intact in spite of the devastations of War, the wonderful Art collections, the superb architecture of the churches and public buildings, and the air of romance which hangs about the medieval towns form an irresistible attraction year by year.

Long before the Harbour Mouth at Ostend, with its narrow waterway and two long " estacades " or piers, is distinguishable from the Dover. Ostend mail boat as it draws in towards the land on its way across the North Sea, the huge hotels on the Digue, which appear either grey or

Blankenberghe.

gleaming white, as the sun is obscure or shining, seem to creep up out of the sea like an irregular row of teeth of some huge sea monster which has been left by the receding tide upon the low-lying shore.

The summer life of the Plage at Ostend is the quintessence of the life of all the pleasure resorts great and small — La Panne, Mariakerke, Westende, Blankenberghe, Heyst, and Knocke — along that favoured coast. It is fashionable, idle, and yet in a measure strenuous for everyone seeks for amusement of some kind or other, generally irrespective of the

Ostend.
The old harbour

Ostend. The fishing fleet.

cost. In Ostend one has Europe crushed into an area of a few hundred yards in depth, and two or three miles in length.

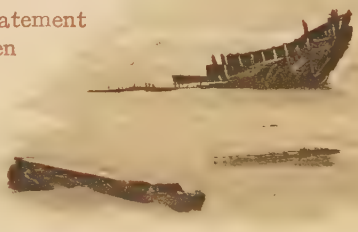
On the Digue, which is one of the most magnificent promenades of Europe, one sees in the season almost everyone who is anyone in Europe and in most of the great palaces of hotels, which rear proud façades along the marvellous sea front, and gaze out with many windowed eyes across the changeful expanse of the open sea, these people dwell.

Once an ancient town Ostend, save for a few inconsiderable fragments stowed away here and there, is very modern. And although it suffered during the War far less than might have been expected, those things of the older order which passed away in smoke, and noise, and shedding of blood have been replaced by the most modern of reconstructions.

The costly round of daily pleasure can deplete the coffers of a Croesus, indeed, in no similar resort in the world, possibly, is a day of pleasure so elaborately planned by its votaries as at Ostend. There is the etiquette of each hour, and each amusement has its proper time. Bathing, horse-racing, lawn tennis, and croquet at the Club or on the Plage; golf, gambling in the Club Privé, at the Casino, and at other resorts; dancing, music,

Shrimpers.

balls, epicurean feeding in private or in public — in the softly lighted " cabinets particuliers " of the expensive restaurants, or in the great glass windows of the huge hotels — all have their proper hours. And sleep? Well, one gets it as one may. Possibly only the professional beauties sleep by rule at Ostend in the season.



There is a literary link, serious statement as this may seem, however, between England and Ostend for in April 1816 after a stormy crossing, Byron landed here after fleeing from London in his famous coach from the bailiffs and duns who had rendered his life miserable for a year and more previously in his house in Piccadilly; and in a house in the Rue Longue, at the back of the Digue, for three or four years lived that great laughter-maker Tom Hood. But there was of

A life boat.

Ostend. The beach.

course, no Digue like that of the present day when Hood sought to walk along the coast, and sniff the keen fresh North Sea air which blows uncontaminated by the smoke of cities, or the lungs of men direct from the Arctic Circle.

Ostend at ten o'clock on a morning of sunshine, with a deep blue vault of sky above and stately sailing Argosies of fleecy white clouds, and the sea ultramarine, or the colour of absinthe, as it may be of a depth almost unfathomable, or shallow with the white sand shining up through it, is, indeed, a gay and delightful place. Already many of the hundreds of bathing machines are lumbering their way down to the water's edge, and a very little while later the sea is literally alive with bathers and the morning scurry for machines and reversions of machines begins. In the water is now a gay and laughing throng.

But after all Ostend does not consist entirely of Digue

A bather.

huge Hotels, and the brilliant expensive gaiety of its fashionable crowd. There is much to interest the quieter type of visitor in the life of the older portion of the town; in the back streets behind the colossal hotels, for in byways, in the market, and on the quays of the harbour may be found many interesting and picturesque types and sights such as artists love. Among them, vistas of shipping, fishing boats with rust-red sails, and with smoke-blue or tanned nets triced up to the mastheads to dry; quaint little dog-drawn milk carts with shining brass or aluminium cans, and the old women who so frequently trudge alongside of them, their heads covered with Flanders caps, and wearing wooden sabots, while market women of the *Marché aux Herbes*, the fishermen of the quays and *Marché aux Poissons* near the new Bassin, the seamen of the docks, and the country folk who flock into the town in all the glory of best clothes and spotless caps on Sundays and *Fêtes*, are picturesque and quaint. What is true regarding the life at Ostend in a general sense is true in a less degree of all other resorts along the Belgian littoral.

Ostend. Byron's lodgings.

Blankenberghe, which lies some dozen miles to the east of Ostend, with a quaint harbour and a fine Digue, is a delightful place.

It is, in fact, a small Ostend. What is true of its greater sister applies in a less degree to it. There is the same magnificent sea air, and wide stretch of level, hard sand, the Casino and the fashionable and semi-fashionable crowd. But stowed away at the back of the town is an old-time church, and a picturesque and deserted churchyard which many artists have painted. It is the most interesting, and almost the only ancient thing the town boasts. Near-by, too, lies the little Bassin into which, through a narrow neck of water between two jetties in

The wreck of the Intrepid.

bad weather, when the seas during north and north-east gales rush shoreward in mountainous masses of water and foam across the wide expanse of sandy beach, runs the fishing fleet.

Zeebrugge has made great history, such history, indeed, as is out of all proportion to its geographical or commercial importance. Before the War it was just the seaward end of the famous Zeebrugge-Bruges canal, which runs in an unromantically straight line for nine miles or so across flat fields, and sandy stretches of soil. To-day the tiny collection of houses, hutments, the locks, and " bassins " has become a place to which pilgrims come from all over the civilized world. And what wonder? It is not the harbour works, canal, and jetties which bring them, though indeed, they are wonderful in a constructive and unimaginative way, but an imperishable act in a drama of human gallantry and endeavour.

It was on the Saint's day of England, St. George's Day, April 23rd. 1918 that there crept in towards the land, under cover of a bombardment, the immortal squadron under the command of Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, including the *Vindictive, Intrepid, Iphigenia, Thétis, Iris* and *Daffodil*, to make the attack on the Mole and harbour.

Zeebrugge. The Mole.

It may be truly written of the men who manned the ships and planned the undertaking, that they, greatly daring all, wrought much.

The adventure has taken its place among the records of the most gallant deeds of the British navy, and has become a " classic exploit of sea-warfare ".

Heyst, still further towards the eastern frontier, is a bright and bracing place much frequented by English visitors. It is tranquil, delightful, and even slow. Thus it attracts with a lure quite different to that of Ostend or even Blankenberghe. It is in its infancy and distinctly in no hurry to grow up. It is a place to which quieter folk have been literally driven by the feverish gaiety of Ostend, and the more formal joys of Blankenberghe.

When Knocke is reached it is but a step into Holland. One should see the little town in sunset glow. Then, with its windmill, its fields, which lie at its back behind the dunes, its white cottages, its straggling street, its air of unconsidered planning it is really delightful.

Westward from Ostend lie the shattered remains of several little watering places, Mariakerke, Middelkerke, Westende, Nieuport-Bains, and La Panne, all of which are arising, phœnix-like, from their ashes They have interest from their records in the War, and the sites — where new townlets are being built — are to the Allied peoples in a sense " holy ground ".

Bruges. The Lac d'Amour.

CHAPTER II

Bruges, Its History, Picturesqueness and Romance

It is difficult, indeed, for one who knows and loves the old city of Bruges to write about it without a seeming exaggeration of enthusiasm. Probably most people who see it for the first time are almost overwhelmed by its wealth of beauty, and picturesqueness, which one can only fully realize and thoroughly assimilate after several visits.

It is truly, as Campbell wrote of something quite different,

> **" A monument of ages dark**
> **That speaks traditions high**
> **Of minstrels, tournaments, crusades,**
> **And mail-clad chivalry. "**

The last time we were in Bruges we saw in the faint sunshine of an early summer morning — soon after dawn — one of the most famous of Belgian regiments passing along an ancient street. Somehow it seemed

" out of the picture ". One would rather have expected to see mail-clad warriors and richly caparisoned steeds. Surely in some of the ancient by-ways of this delightful city of a living past ghosts must walk. Under the moon, as one strolls along the tree-shadowed Quai Vert or Quai du Rosaire, the scene of such wonderful commercial activity when Bruges was truly the great market of Northern Europe and deserved the name it then boasted " the Venice of the North ", one may expect the shades of the old merchant princes and traders, who made the city so prosperous and envied, to step out of the shadows, and emerge into view round corners.

Bruges of all anciently great and prosperous cities of Flanders has best preserved its former glamour and distinction. It is still in part surrounded by its town walls, the gates through which Maximilian of Austria entered the city on June 1, 1485 are still used; and the Church of St. Sauveur, in which the funeral of Charles the Bold took place, and where the first Knights of the Golden Fleece were installed, is still standing, an exquisite survival of medieval architecture in which the inhabitants of the ancient city worship, and to which visitors from all parts of the

Bruges. The Porte d'Ostende.

Bruges. The Porte de Gand.

world come. In many of the towns and cities of Flanders one finds incomparably beautiful fragments of the past, here an old building, there a belfry; in one an Hotel de Ville of the Renaissance, in another a church dating from the Crusades, and a beautiful reminder of the days when each builder's workman was a craftsman, and perhaps even a visionary. But Bruges remains the complete gem of a medieval city, such a gem, indeed, as no other Western European country can show.

In the Middle Ages James Thomson's lines

> " A proud city, populous and rich,
> Full of the works of peace, and high in joy "

must have been very applicable to Bruges. It had become the entrepôt of the then civilized world. Where the Reye flowed in those times into the Zwin, grew up one of the safest harbours in the Low Countries, and alongside the quays of the city, and in the haven of Damme towards the sea in due time lay or rode at anchor the ships of most European and indeed, those of many extra-European nations.

At the beginning of the XIIIth century Bruges had become the central market of the great Hanseatic League and along its many quays houses still stand which were the palaces of merchants famous in their Time, and the warehouses of the then known world.

Bruges. The Porte Ste Croix.

Into Bruges came the rich fabrics of the East — the products of Turkish and even of Persian looms; the bales of English wool — then greatly esteemed, shorn from Southdown and other noted herds, to be re-exported later on, after having been spun into the famous Flemish broadcloths which enjoyed an European reputation. From the then port of Bruges, too, were sent across the seas the exquisite lace for which the deft fingers of Flemish women have always been noted, and of which there is a beautiful collection of ancient specimens in the Gruuthuuse Museum; and the tapestries and the linen spun from the flax of not far distant Courtrai.

One cannot do more than indicate the outline of the romantic story of the decline of this proud, prosperous and richly-dowered city. To do so adequately, would fill

A Young girl of Sluys.

Bruges. The Quai Vert.

a volume of romantic interest. But one may briefly mention as the chief cause of this decline the silting up of the Zwin, a general term applied to creeks on the Belgian sea-coast, but one more especially attached to the great arm of the sea which put Bruges in communication with the North Sea by way of Sluys.

At the beginning of the xvth century we see the city commencing a hundred years' struggle against the silting up of its channel and harbour. But vital as the problem was, the various bodies engaged in its solution were unable to grapple successfully with the insidious enemy which was slowly but surely destroying the prosperity and importance of their city.

There were secondary reasons for the decline of Bruges. Among them the paralysis of its trade brought about by the violent insurrections against the rule of Maximilian, which cause, however, has tended to be exaggerated. Of far greater consequence was the gradual break up of that great trading organisation the Hanseatic League, and more especially the disorganization and disbanding of the towns forming the German League, which had great trading interests, and a Bank at Bruges in the sixteenth century.

The Gruthuis.

Bruges. A canal.

Yet another cause was the discovery of America, which brought about a very far-reaching and profound change in the methods of commerce, which may indeed, be said to have marked the commencement of the modern era. And yet another reason for the decline was religious dissensions, the influence of which cannot well be ever-estimated.

And to a large extent as Bruges was left at the commencement of the XVth century one finds it to-day. The great North Sea Canal, constructed at a vast cost, with its sea-port at Zeebrugge, has done something, if not nearly all that was expected, to awaken the life of Bruges which has however, one would imagine, little to gain from modernisation, and indeed, almost everything to lose.

Bruges to-day, it must be remembered, is but half the size of that fair medieval city of the early XIIIth century : its population, perhaps, barely one fifth. Most of the great palaces of the foreign and other merchants of the great Hanseatic League have fallen gradually into decay, and many have entirely disappeared. But there is an amazing survival of both domestic as well as ecclesiastical architecture still left, and behind the curtained windows of the greater houses of the burghers — the ancestors of whom in many cases were the great merchant princes of the Middle Ages — is led a life, even to-day, of seclusion that seems strangely out of keeping with the century in which we live, but in keeping

with the atmosphere of the ancient town, its deserted quays, silent by-streets, and air of eternal peace and age.

Art of necessity played its part in the golden age of Bruges. Here

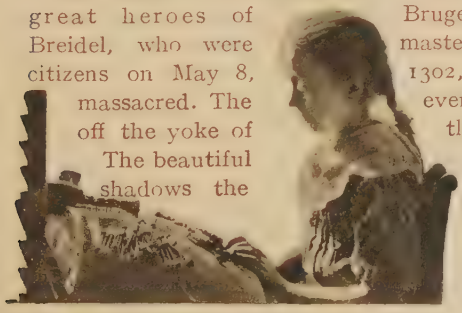
Bruges. The Belfry.

are a few among the most famous of artists who made the city their headquarters, or who lived there. Hans Memlinc, from about 1477-1494, who left an inestimable treasure of art behind him in the paintings which adorn the world-famed Chasse, or Reliquary of St. Ursula, and other remarkable works; Lancelot Blondeel; Jan van Eyck, who lived in Bruges between the years 1428 and 1440; Peter Cristus who settled in Bruges in 1443; Peter Pourbus, who worked in Bruges; Colard Mansion, the famous printer, who was one of the leaders in the typographical art. And last, but by no means least, Caxton, the first English printer,

Bruges. The Grande Place.

who lived at the English factory known as Domus Anglorum, for a period of thirty years, from 1446-1476.

Most of those who desire to study and know the grey, old town, we fancy, turn their steps at first to the Grande Place, or in Flemish *Groote Markt*, now-a-days as of old the centre of its life, and formerly the forum and meeting-place of the burghers when they were summoned to arms by the belfry chimes to repel an attack upon their town, or to set forth upon one of their numerous expeditions against neighbouring cities. A statue in the centre of the Square, by Paul Devigne, commemorates the two great heroes of Bruges, Pieter de Coninck and Jan Breidel, who were masters of Guilds, and the leaders of the citizens on May 8, 1302, when the French garrison was massacred. The event helped the Flemings to throw off the yoke of the Kings of France.



Lacemaker of Bruges.

The beautiful and historic belfry which overshadows the GrandePlace, was in a sense, the sign manual of Bruges' freedom. Permission to erect such a Belfry

Bruges. An old street.

as an evidence of independence, and for the purpose of calling citizens to arms on occasion, was one of the first privileges which the German trading towns always sought from their feudal lords in the Middle Ages.

The present Belfry replaced a first tower of wood, and was constructed in or about the year 1291. It took a century to build. It has, through the passage of the centuries, been thrice consumed by fire and thrice rebuilt. It rises above the Halles, which form its lower section, 270 ft.; or to a total height above the Grande Place of 350 ft. The two lower stories are a portion of the original XIIIth century tower, the upper or octagon portion dates from about 1482.

Few, we imagine, can hear the carillon of this famous belfry for the first time without enchantment. The original chimes were placed in it in 1299, and the present carillon consists of 49 bells, most of them cast in 1743. They play each quarter, and their tones are particularly sweet.

The night we heard them first was a memorable one. As we passed along the silent and almost deserted streets, inwards from the grim Porte d'Ostende, to the Grande Place, shadowy figures, their modernity of dress veiled by a kindly blue-grey obscurity, came now and then into view.

Suddenly the chimes rang out in thin, sweet notes of melody, apparently far up in the blue and velvety semi darkness of the summer night's sky or as though falling down to us from amidst the glittering stars, the music seeming to recall with mysterious distinctness the romantic story of the sleepy town. It was almost with a shock that we came at last upon

the Grande Place, blazing with lights, and echoing to the tinkle of the pianos of the various *cafés*, and with the wailing note of a violin cutting the night air like a thread of silvery music.

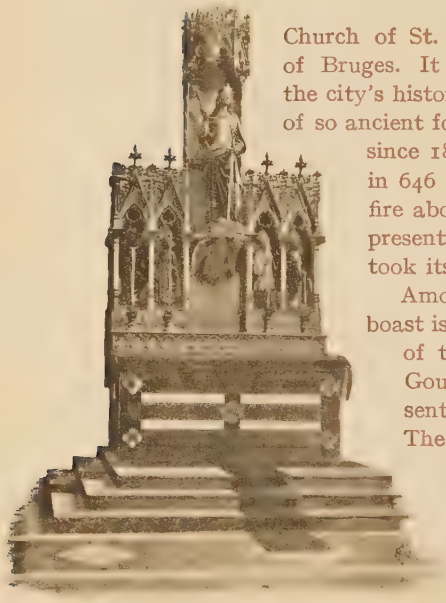
The Halles built about the middle of the XIIIth century are a fine, if somewhat severe example of Early Gothic architecture. The left hand wing or portion of the building was formerly the Cloth Hall, recalling the days when the city was a great cloth manufacturing centre. Above the entrance to the Belfry is a statue of the Blessed Virgin, taken from its place above the entrance gate of the Hotel de Gruuthuuse. In ancient days there were so many figures of the Virgin Mary over gateways, at street corners, and on public and other buildings that Bruges became known as the Maria Stad, or City of Mary.

There is scarcely a street in this charming medieval city that does not still contain a remarkable or beautiful house-front, or some exquisite architectural detail or piece of carving. Around the Grande Place are grouped many such houses as we have in recollection.

Along the quaint and narrow Rue des Pierres lies the Cathedral

Bruges. Maison du Pélican.

Bruges. The Cathedral from the Hospital of St-Jean.



Church of St. Sauveur, one of the architectural beauties of Bruges. It dates from the most prosperous period of the city's history, the XIIIth to the XVth centuries. Though of so ancient foundation it has only ranked as a Cathedral since 1834. The original church, built upon this spot in 646 by St. Eloi or St. Eligius, was destroyed by fire about the middle of the XIIth century, and the present fine and impressive early Gothic building took its place,

Among the great works of art that the church can boast is the wonderful triptych painted for the Guild of the Holy Sacrament by Peter Pourbus, of Gouda. On the back of the outer wings is a representation of the Miraculous Mass of St. Gregory. The legend tells us that after the saint had consecrated the Host it was changed into the bodily presence of Our Lord so that the scepticism of a doubter might be dissi-

Bruges.

pated. The subject is therefore one particularly suited to a Guild which was founded to perpetuate the belief in actual Transubstantiation.

Those who are interested in the various manifestations of Medieval Art will not miss seeing the reliquaries; the ivory staff of the XVIth century St. Maclou; the XVth century sheet of lead, engraved with the history of St. Gunhild sister of Harold II of England; the XIIth century crozier of St. Martial; the XIVth century brasses in the Chapel of the Shoemakers' Guild; the beautiful embroideries to be found in the Salle des Chanoines; the finely carved stalls of the Choir, above which appear the armorial bearings of the Knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece, founded at Bruges, by Philip the Good, in 1429.

Bruges. Interior of St-Sauveur.

Although it cannot be said that the brickwork of the Bruges churches and public buildings is comparable with that of the best specimens of architecture in this material to be found in more Southern and Eastern Europe, the Cathedral from the outside is a building of considerable dignity and impressiveness. It has a western tower; a nave of four bays distinguished by its comparative shortness; transepts, with a chapel on the eastern side of each; and a choir of four bays, terminating in a fivesided apse. The clerestory which runs throughout the building is lofty. Seen from the

east, the group of five semi-hexagonal chapels, which communicate with the aisles, give an appearance of spaciousness and dignity to the building which is striking.

One is at once impressed by the great height of the nave, the arches of which, and those of the choir, rise from graceful clusters of slender shafts. It will be noticed that in the latest portion of the building, which is the ambulatory behind the apse, the arcades which separate it from the chapels are very similar to those found at Louvain and Antwerp, where the arch mouldings are carried down the columns without being broken by capitals.

There is a charming view of the choir which no one should miss, to be obtained through the grilles and gates of the screen, which is of vari-coloured marbles and from the design of Cornelius Ver Hoeve.

Bruges. The Cathedral.

Few can stand in this great Cathedral, which has witnessed so many stirring scenes in the history of the town and of the Low Countries, and almost within a stone's throw of which so much drama has been in the far off centuries enacted, without wonder, and at least some appreciation of the great Age of the Renaissance which gave to the world such treasures of architecture.

St. Sauveur remains in the memory as a building of extraordinary architectural and historical interest and charm.

It is but a couple of hundred yards or so through the quaint and tree-shadowed churchyard, and along the old Rue du St. Esprit to the

other great Church of Bruges, Notre Dame, the beautiful, tapering spire, of which rises to a height of 400 feet above the pavement. It is one of the loftiest in Belgium, and seems to follow one in one's peregrinations through the quaint and narrow streets of the neighbourhood whenever a clear skyline and a little space is obtained.

Bruges. The Jerusalem Church.

The church is generally believed to have been founded by an Englishman, St. Boniface, formerly called Winfrid, as early as 745. It was upon the site of Winfrid's early chapel that the original building was begun about 880.

Almost entirely destroyed by fire in 1116, the present building dates mostly from the XIIIth and XIVth centuries.

The plan of the church, from the fact that work of so many periods has been incorporated, is unusually irregular, and it is, indeed, largely owing to this that the building both without and within has so undeniable a charm of picturesqueness for the unlearned, and a deep and abiding interest for architects and students.

Under the tower there is a beautiful XVth century portico, known in Flemish as Het Paradijs, which has been converted into a baptistry, unhappily it is much defaced.

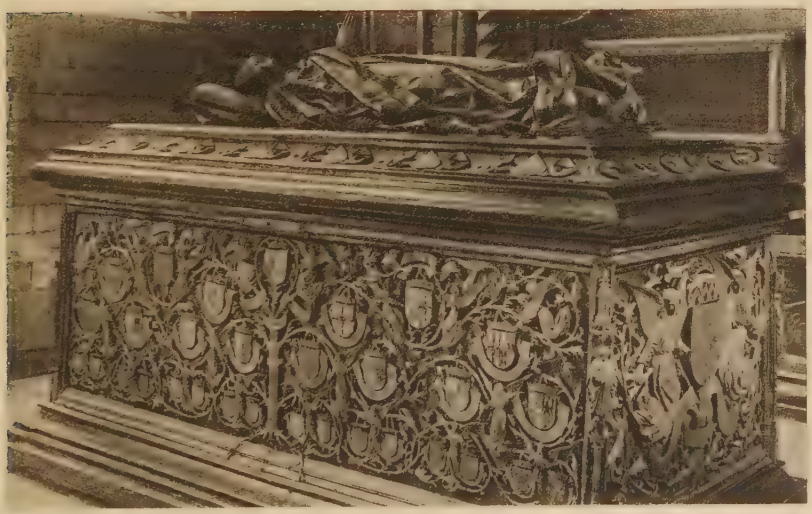
The interior of Notre-Dame has suffered greatly from the XVIth cent-

ury onwards. It was whitewashed first in 1589 and exactly three centuries later underwent a similar process of disfigurement. In the XIIth century the roof was left open ; the central nave was first vaulted in the XVth century and re-vaulted in 1768. Unfortunately the beautiful original triforium was pulled down and replaced by ugly looking arcades. A great deal of excellent restoration work was accomplished during the two decades immediately preceeding the War and to-day the interior, when viewed from the far end of the nave has a lightness and spaciousness which if one is not too critical of the mixed styles of architecture, is far from unpleasing.

The early XVIIIth century rood-loft surmounted by the organ and a huge XVIth century crucifix unfortunately restricts the view of the choir, and one cannot feel that the large statues of the apostles on brackets against the columns of the nave contribute either to its dignity or beauty. The organ case is elaborate and a very fine specimen of wood carving.

The wooden pulpit, dating from 1743, is a good example of the work of the period, and of the very elaborate and rather flamboyant type very generally found in the more important Belgian churches.

One should note a very graceful piece of Flemish woodwork in the



Tomb of Marie of Burgundy.

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The shrine of the Sacred Blood.

upper part of the wall at the north east corner of the procession path, this was originally the familly pew of the Seigneur de la Gruuthuuse, one Sire Louis de Bruges, in 1474. It was connected by a passage with his dwelling, the Gruuthuuse, which adjoins the eastern end of the church.

There is a considerable amount of very good modern stained glass in the church, and that in the three windows of the apsidal chapel, which opens in the middle of the procession path, is of especial interest because of its iconography, type and anti-type being shown of the subjects in adjacent lights of the same window.

The very fine tombs of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and his daughter Mary, the wife of the Emperor Maximilian, who were the last representatives of the once powerful House of Burgundy, are in a chapel opening from the south aisle of the choir by two semi-circular arches of the Latest Gothic period. The effigies are of copper richly gilt, and repose on slabs of touchstone and polished black marble. Both are crowned, and Charles the Bold is represented in full armour and wearing the badge of the Golden Fleece.

To be noted are the sides of each tomb with the effigies of angels, and small enamelled coats of arms of the numerous duchies, counties, and lordships which the heiress of Charles brought to the House of Austria.

Perhaps the greatest treasure of art in the church is the altarpiece in the

Chapel of the Sacred Blood.

Garden of the Hospital of St-Jean

Garden of the Hospital of St-Jean.

large chapel on the south side of the nave. Here is enshrined the world-famous group in parian marble of the Virgin and Child at least designed if not actually chiselled by Michael Angelo. Backed by a canopied niche of black marble the gracious and exquisite figure of the Virgin with the Infant Christ standing between her knees, is thrown into bold relief It was for this group that Horace Walpole is reputed to have offered 30.000 florins, so that it might pass into his possession, and be taken to adorn Strawberry Hill.

The remaining two churches of Bruges, which call for mention, are St. Jacques, a large and lofty building situated north-westward of the Grande Place, reached most pleasantly by a round-about route along the Quais, or more directly along the Rue St. Jacques. The church, founded in the XIIth century has its oldest portion dating from the XIIIth, and the main fabric from the XVth. It contains some good and interesting paintings, among which are works by Peter Pourbus, Lancelot Blondeel, Albert Cornelis, and Jan van Oost, the Elder. Also a terra cotta Della Robbia relief.

The other church is the Église de Jerusalem, or Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It has a remarkable tower surmounted by a globe, a raised

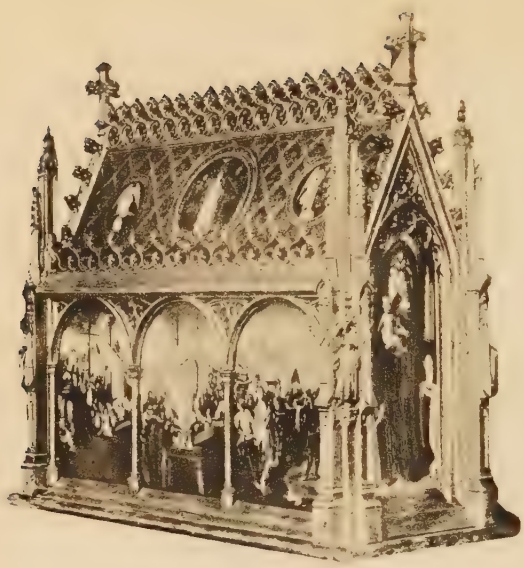
choir, reliquaries of the xvth century, and some good stained glass dating from about 1482-1562.

Not far from the Church, along the Rue de Jerusalem, is the Rue des Blanchisseurs in which is the Vlissinghe, a typical old Flemish tavern well-worth inspection, with charming gables and time-worn tiled roof, its low-ceiled chambers and memories of Rubens, who used to visit it, said in the Middle Ages to have been the meeting place of many of the famous Bruges painters.

The whole of this district, indeed, is of great interest architecturally, and the observant wanderer along its highways and byways will come across some excellent and most picturesque specimens of old-time houses. Several in the Rue de Marécage, N° 28 in particular, and others at the corner of the Rue St. Jacques should be noted.

Bruges.
The old mill.

Between the Cathedral and Notre-Dame lies the peaceful garden of the Hôpital de St. Jean, the cluster of ancient buildings, originally a foundation of Augustinian brothers and nuns from as early a date as 1188, still used for the purpose for which it was instituted after the passage of nearly eight centuries, and maintaining within and without



The shrine of St Ursula.

even at the present day its medieval character.

One may reach this famous and picturesque Hospital, with its tottering and crumbling walls almost slipping into the canal on one side, and in spring summer and autumn beautified by greenery, roses, and homely garden flowers, by several routes from the Grande Place. But the lover of the picturesque, and the adventurous, will be wise in choosing that by way of the Place des Tanneurs, the charming Quai du Rosaire, and along the canal which can be reached through the archway leading between the Hotel de Ville and the Ancien Greffe.

Though a visit to this old-world hospital is interesting to it come at least ninety per cent of visitors on account of the small but world-famed picture gallery which it possesses. To miss this indeed, would be to have omitted to see one of the chief glories of Bruges, and of medieval art.

Here one has the opportunity of studying, amid surroundings which are singularly happy and appropriate, the exquisite art of Hans Memlinc, whose wonderful genius for miniature-painting and poetry in pigments is here far better represented in its fulness and richness of accomplishment than it is anywhere else.

Of Hans Memlinc, the man (whose name is variously written) little is known. There are many fabled stories about him. One is that he came to the hospital as a fugitive and wounded soldier from the Battle of Granson in 1476. But a well-known authority inclines to the belief that Menlinc was probably born in Germany about the year 1430, possibly at Mayence, and

St Ursula hiding her companions.

afterwards probably became a pupil of Roger van der Weyden, of Brussels. He was at the time of his coming to Bruges, about 1478, a man of considerable wealth. He died in 1495.

Memlic.

It is well known that the best of all Memlinc's work is that adorning the wonderful *chasse* or shrine made to contain the relic or holy arm of St. Ursula. It was this shrine that the Hospital authorities in 1480 commissioned the artist to decorate.

There is not space here to detail the story of the Saint who was the means of bringing into existence the incomparable work of such a master. It may, however, be said that she was supposed to have been a British princess, brought up in the Christian faith. After adventurous journeyings to Basle, Rome, and afterwards to Cologne, in company with an army of 11.000 virgins, Ursula on her refusal to wed the Hunnish leader, who was at the latter city, attacking a Roman colony after over-running Europe, was shot with three arrows in the breast by him, and thus martyred after the 11.000 maidens, and her escort, in which was the then pope, her betrothed husband, Prince Ethereus, and other high ecclesiastical dignitaries, had been massacred.

The *chasse* or shrine of St. Ursula is fashioned in the form of a miniature Gothic chapel, and was completed sometime prior to the 21st of Oct. 1489. On the gables, are the Virgin and St. Ursula. On the sides, the legend of the Saint, which because of the exquisite art of the painter it is easy to follow. The scene of the arrival at Rome is the most exquisite, on account both of colouring and composition.

The other authentic works of the master are the large altar-screen, representing the Blessed Virgin, with St. Catherine, St. Barbara,

St. John the Baptist, and St. John the Evangelist. The shutters on the oustside are of great interest as they show the brothers and sisters of the Hospital for whom the work was painted, with their patron saints. The motive of the altar piece is to glorify the two patrons of the Hospital, the two Saints John, and the two types of life the active, symbolized by St. Catherine, and the contemplative, symbolized by St. Barbara.

Memlic. Arrival of the Pilrims at Rome.

The second work, is a triptych, the subject of which is the Adoration of the Child Christ by Its Mother and the Angels. The whole is a poem in colour, illustrative of the Fall and the Redemption. It was painted in 1479.

The third work, is a portrait of Mary, the wife of William Moreel painted in the character of the Sambetha Sibyl. It dates from 1480.

The fourth work, is a triptych, The Deposition from the Cross, with side panels of Brother Adrian Reyns with his patron Saint, and St. Barbara : and on the back of wings, St. Wilgeforte and St. Mary of Egypt.

The fifth work, is a diptych, containing a portrait of Martin van Nieuwenhove: and the Virgin with the golden apple, 1487. It is a vigorous work with warm and strong colouring, and with great purity of line.

There is another authentic picture of Memlinc in the Academy Museum.

In all of Memlinc's work the same characteristics will be noted, the great amount of character in the portraits, small though they usually

are; the rich colouring; and the wonderful minuteness and charm of the backgrounds of both landscapes and buildings.

One of the most beautiful places in Bruges in point of situation is the ancient Béguinage of the Vineyard standing almost on the very banks, of the Minnewater, that delightful lake with its shady promenade and graceful, snow-white swans. The Béguinage dates from the XIIIth century and is formed by a collection of white-walled, and quaint houses, shadowed by ancient trees, and breathing quietude and peace. The Renaissance porch, with decorative paintings on the shingles of the roof, by which one enters the quadrangle is reached by an arched bridge spanning the canal. The grounds of the Béguinage are worth entering if for nothing else than because of the strange, old-world charm of the grassy, tree-shaded enclosure, across which the " Sisters " in their flowing robes and white head-dresses are constantly flitting.

One obtains a delightful vista of the elegant spire of Notre-Dame from the courtyard of the Béguinage, which composes into a charming picture above and beyond the high-pitched gables of the white-walled almshouses.

The Minnewater, or Lac d'Amour as it is poetically called, is a pool which was dug at the junction of the Reye and Zwin. It dates from very early times and was, in 1330, enlarged so as to serve as a dock when the

Bruges. The Bridge of the Béguinage.

canal was dug through Bruges from Ghent to Ostend. The view from the bridge at the far end is particularly charming.

As is the case along the quaint old quais, artists abound, either painting the distant town, the remaining bridge tower dating from 1401, and placed there by John Van Oudenarde and Martin Van Luevene; the beautiful sylvan scene; or the time-worn Hongersnoodmolen (" Famine Mill "), built in 1481, and of late years restored and enlarged.

To Louis de Maele, Count of Flanders, Bruges owes one of its most gracious and beautiful architectural treasures, the Hotel de Ville, which stands on the south side of the Place du Bourg. By many this fascinating example of Middle Gothic architecture is considered as the most perfect building of its kind in Northern Europe, though doubtless this claim will be disputed in the future as it has been in the past. The foundation stone was laid by Louis on Jan. 4. 1376, and three years later the buildings was almost finished. The completion of the work was, however, delayed, and there appears good reason to believe that the beautiful building was not finally completed until about the year 1420.

The chief architectural feature of interest for students in the façade of the Hotel de Ville is the arrangement, which appears to have originated

Bruges. The Béguinage.

at Bruges, of long panels or arcades in which are placed windows, one above another, in such a manner as to suggest that they are a series of long single windows reaching from the basement to the spring of the roof.

There are several tiers of sculptures, in the lower, to the right and left of the doorway, one can distinguish the subject as being that of the Annunciation, with other figures of prophets and saints.

The roof of the great Hall, which is a very fine example of pendent Gothic wood work, should be noted. The corbels, dating from 1397-1402, represent the months of the year. The keystones of the vault, which was painted in 1404, are of Biblical scenes and the figures of saints. A study of the fine modern pictures of the late Albrecht de Vriendt (1843-1900), and his brother Julius, depicting scenes and incidents in the civic, ecclesiastical and commercial development of Bruges, gives one a very good idea of the history of the city, and its life in medieval times, and of the romance which is bound up with it.

Adjoining the Hotel de Ville to the left is the Maison de l'Ancien Greffe Flamand, or the old Municipal Record Office. It is now a Court of Law. It is chiefly interesting in that it was the second building erected in the city in the style of the Renaissance, in 1535-1537. The building was, restored during the seventies, and the portions which had been

Hôtel de Ville. Bruges.

decorated in colours in 1537 were renewed according to the original design, so far as ascertainable from the faint traces remaining. The Court Room, which has been decorated in good taste deserves a visit, and the old doorway, attributed to Lancelot Blondeel, dating from 1544, was formerly in the Cathedral.

On the right of the Hotel de Ville is the famous Chapelle du Saint Sang. Of the original building of Theodoric of Alsace, who was elected Count of Flanders in 1128, only the lower floor remains. Over this, in the xvth century, was erected a second and more ornate structure — as was also the case with the Sainte Chapelle of St. Louis of France, in Paris — in which is preserved the Holy Blood which Theodoric brought back with him from Palestine in 1149.

Every year on the first Monday after the 2nd of May, there passes through the streets and Grande Place of the ancient city the " Procession of the Holy Blood " when the relic, in its shrine, is carried from the Chapel of the Holy Blood to the Cathedral, where it is laid upon the High Altar and Mass is celebrated, after which the Procession, headed

Bruges. The Quai du Rosaire.

Bruges. The Law Courts.

by a military escort, starts on its way. It is an impressive and interesting sight, reviving the pageantry of the Middle Ages, and providing a number of elaborate and effective historical tableaux. To the "Noble Confrérie du Précieux Sang", or "Brotherhood of the Holy Blood" is confided the custody of the relic as it is carried through the streets. Ecclesiastical dignitaries of all ranks take part in the procession, the higher wearing magnificent vestments.

The church is dedicated to St. Basil, a Greek monk little known in Western Europe, who was the

An early Chimney piece.

founder of Eastern monasticism. Nearly all the decorations in this beautiful little Chapelle du Saint Sang have some reference to the Holy Blood, its miraculous preservation, and incidents which occured during its transport to Bruges.

On the right of the Chapel is a small one, separated from it by an arcade of three arches, in which is the tabernacle or canopy under which the sacred Blood is exhibited every Friday. It was said to have liquified every Friday down to the XIVth century.

The Museum of the Confraternity is on the first floor, and it contains many treasures of art. There are the two shutters of a very fine triptych by P. Pourbus, placed on either side of the reliquary of the Holy Blood; some fine specimens of Bruges lace; the Reliquary of the Holy Blood, a remarkable shrine in gold and silver enriched by precious stones, the work of Jan Crabbe of the city in 1617. This great Reliquary is only used when the Blood is carried in procession.

Poorters Loge.

In the Court Room is one of the most remarkable and beautiful Renaissance fireplaces in Belgium. It occupies almost the whole of one side of the room. It was executed for the Council of the Liberty of Bruges by Lancelot Blondeel and Guyot de Beaugrant de Malines, in honour of

the treaty of Cambray, by which Francis V of France was compelled in 1529, to acknowledge the independence of Flanders

On the eastern side of the Quai de la Poterie and not far from the ancient Porte de Damme, stands the Hospice de la Poterie, now an asylum or almshouses for old women. It is of very ancient origin, the present building dating from about 1276 it is supposed replaced an earlier one.

In this abode of ancient peace one comes in contact with the spirit of the past, its beauty and its sentiment. While in this neighbourhood one should certainly see the ancient Poorters' Loge, or " Citizens " Lodge till comparatively recent years the Academy of Fine Arts. It was in the XIVth century the resort of the Brugeois — in fact a kind of Club — and in connection with it was a tilting club, known as the " White Bears ", the emblem of which is still to be noticed in a niche at the corner of the building, wearing a collar, and bearing a shield in its paws. This figure is known to the towns-folk by the nickname of the " Oldest Citizen of Bruges ".

In the Square Jan Van Eyck is a fine white stone building dating from 1477. It has a beautiful porch. The upper story is now the public library. Near by is the Musée Communale, or Académie, in the Rue St. Catherine, in which are gathered together some of the most interesting and valuable examples of Early Flemish Art, including world-famed works of Van Eyck, Gerard David, Jean Provost, Antoine Claessens, Jacob Van Oost, Hugo Van der Goes and others.

Ghent. A quay.

CHAPTER III

Ghent, the City of Flowers : Oudenarde and its Beautiful Hotel de Ville.

Few cities of Belgium have so interesting a history as Ghent. The beautiful old town, of recent times modernised, and instinct with life and industrial and intellectual activity, has from time immemorial been the capital of East Flanders, and was, in the Middle Ages a keen commercial rival of its neighbour Bruges. It stands at the junction of the Scheldt with the Lys, where there arose in the very earliest period of the Middle Ages a rapidly growing trading town, known as Gent in Flemish, Gand in French, but which is now-a-days written either Gand or Ghent. As is the case with Bruges it, too, is built over a network of rivers and canals, derived mostly from the two main streams, the Lys and the Scheldt.

Panorama of Ghent.

Perhaps one of the most famous Flower Markets in Europe is that of Brussels, but Ghent merits the description of a City of Flowers, from the quantities that are grown in its outskirts for the Brussels and Paris markets, and do so much to beautify the city, and its gardens.

The chief industry of the city from its early days has been weaving, and Ghent grew so rapidly, and was so powerful during the Middle Ages that in time, although the citizens had received from their Count the usual charters, such as were granted by the feudal lords of cities, its subjection to the latter became almost purely nominal. And though owing allegiance both to the Counts of Flanders and the Dukes of Burgundy, the citizens enjoyed such privileges and immunities as rendered them *de facto* almost independent of both.

The city has a peculiar interest for the English race for in the Middle Ages it was in close commercial relations with England. Early in the XIVth century the burghers struck a blow for, and practically attained, independence under the leadership of the famous brewer, Jacob, or Jacques Van Artevelde.

Edward III, of England, who was in 1337 at war with France, put forward at the instance of Van Artevelde, who sought alliance with

Panorama of Ghent.

the English King, a claim to the throne of France. The commercial results of this friendship were destined to be of much greater importance than the political. England was then the great producer of the raw material, wool, which the town of Ghent needed for industrial activity, and the alliance proved of immense value to both parties.

Van Artevelde, in the course of the development of his alliance with Edward, at last found himself opposed by a strong section of his fellow townsmen when he made to them the suggestion that Edward's son, the Black Prince, should be elected Count of Flanders. The proposition was opposed to the medieval spirit of attachment to a reigning house, and riots took place in the town, during which Van Artevelde himself was assassinated by one Gerard Denys. The immediate effect of this crime was to give an impetus to, and confirm the policy of alliance with England, which the victim of Denys had originated and sought to strengthen.

By 1381 the son of Van Artevelde, Philip, had risen to such power that he was appointed Dictator by the Democratic party; and during the war that he waged against the son of Count Louis of Nevers, who had been his father's enemy, whose forces he defeated with great slaughter

Ghent. Le Rabot.

in a battle just outside Bruges, he gained so much additional renown that he felt himself strong enough to grasp the position of Regent of Flanders. He did not, however, hold this long, for Count Louis, succeeded in obtaining substantial aid from Charles VI of France, and defeated Philip Van Artevelde at the Battle of Roosebeke, in 1382. In this battle Van Artevelde was slain, and with his death may be said to have ended the local freedom of Ghent, and the cities of Flanders.

Like its rival Bruges, the city suffered from the gradual silting up of its ancient waterways, and by the commencement of the XIXth century practically all of them, save the Scheldt, had become impassable, necessitating in 1827 the construction of the great ship canal to Terneuzen, which to-day admits ships approaching two thousand tons burden. It should be remembered that it is largely by reason of this canal that Ghent has been preserved from the decay and commercial isolation which overtook Bruges. Unfortunately for Ghent the great Terneuzen canal has its outlet in Dutch territory, and on account of the heavy tolls which are levied, the waterway, which might be the means of great additional commercial prosperity, is not so much used as it otherwise might be.

The city, however, from its position on the central Belgian railway

Ghent. The Belfry.

Ghent. The quay.

system has much prosperity, derived from its manufacture of cotton, linen, machinery, and leather.

Ghent, has undergone more modernisation than Bruges; but it still retains much that is old and charming. And as one strolls through its streets one encounters many interesting relics of its past, and many quaint corners rich in medieval buildings, and fragments of bygone architecture.

The most ancient portion of the town lies on the Island formed by the junction of the Lys and Scheldt with their various backwaters. It was near this point, but somewhat beyond the Lys, that the Counts of Flanders first erected a strong chateau or castle, known as the Gravenstein or Oudenberg, built about 868 by Baoudorain, or Baldwin of the Iron Arm, as a defence against Norman invaders. It was around this spot, rendered particularly suitable by reason of the presence of two navigable rivers, that the early merchants and weavers gradually settled.

One cannot after arrival in Ghent long escape from the sight of the fine early Gothic belfry, which dominates the centre of the city. Though designed about 1183, nearly

The Great Bell.

a century earlier than that of Bruges, it was not erected until 1321-1339. The windows have been walled up, and other alterations were made in the fabric from time to time. But in 1913 the bell-tower was restored to its original shape, and is now surmounted by a huge dragon in gilded copper dating from 1378, which tradition states was brought back to Bruges from the Mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople, by the Crusader Count Baldwin of Flanders at the beginning of the XIIIth century.

A picturesque corner in Ghent.

One should certainly attempt the ascent of the Belfry notwithstanding its great height, 385ft, because of the wonderful prospect, one obtains of the city, and far out and over the level plain of Flanders, which stretches below one like a green carpet. On a clear day it is possible to see beyond Bruges to Oudenarde on the one hand, and even to discern Antwerp on the other.

The ground floor room bears the intriguing title of " Secret ", because in the Middle Ages the iron chest which contained the records of the privileges of the town was placed here and jealously guarded. In a room of the second floor are many interesting objects and records connected

with the Belfry and its history. And still higher are the clock, and the mechanism which sounds the chimes. There are no fewer than fifty two bells, the four largest of which are on the fifth floor. " Roland ", the greatest bell of all, weighs nearly six tons and is a famous one, though not the original " Roland " or " Roelandt " cast in 1314. That was lowered and broken up by Charles V in February 1540, " to shatter the pride of the Gantois ". The present day " Roland " bears, in Flemish, the following inscription : " My name is Roland : when I toll there is fire. When I ring there is victory in Flanders. "

Old houses in Ghent.

The chimes are almost as noted as those of Bruges, and many consider them the more truly musical.

At the foot of the towering Belfry and adjoining it stands the graceful Gothic edifice of the small, but ancient Cloth Hall, dating from 1424, and of the Decorated Period. From the Cloth Hall to reach the Hotel de Ville one passes through the Marché du Beurre, or Butter Market.

Ghent may well be proud of its ornate, many statued Hotel de Ville, which is one of the most picturesque specimens of Flamboyant Gothic architecture in East Flanders. It is divided into two portions. That in the Early Renaissance Style, which dates from about 1595-1628, is not only one of the earliest but is also in many respects one of the best examples of this type of architecture in Belgium, chiefly on account of the fact that it retains certain interesting features of the local domestic building; for

Ghent. The Hotel de Ville.

example the pointed gable ends and the projecting windows, with dormers, which are to be seen on the main front. In its three stories, with their projecting half-colonades one can discover three distinct types of columns — Doric, Ionic and Corinthian — on the ground floor, first floor and second floor respectively. The other portion of the Hotel de Ville, erected from about 1518-1535, from designs by Dominic de Waghemakere, has a very interesting and handsome balcony. The Gothic work, as a whole, is of the most florid character. The most likely expert criticism to be passed upon it is that it lacks, somewhat, dignity and grace; but it is nevertheless undoubtedly attractive —

Old Houses.

Ghent. The Corn Market.

at least to the less educated eye — in the splendour of its detail. The niches which have been filled hold modern statues of Saints, of great merit.

There are several charming features of the building which are worthy to be especially noted. The beautiful entrance staircase and the main portal over it, with the exquisite little balcony, from which in olden times the decrees of the Counts of Flanders and other similar proclamations were read to the citizens summoned for this purpose by " Roland " from the belfry hard by. The large projecting window belonging to the chapel, near the centre of the façade, is also worth notice.

The interior of the Hotel de Ville contains a handsome Gothic staircase, which has seen many vicissitudes. It was taken out of the original building to be erected in a private house, afterwards it was brought back and re-erected in its present position.

At the west side of the Place du Lion d'Or, behind the Belfry, stands the Church of St. Nicholas, the oldest in the city. It occupies an isolated position, and has a fine tower with turrets at each of the four corners. It dates from the XIth century, but would appear to have been rebuilt in Early Gothic style somewhen between the years 1390 and 1420. The

Ghent, Château des Comtes.

tower is Decorated, and happily it escaped any very serious damage during the religious wars.

The interior of the building has of late years been modernized, and is not particularly pleasing, and the carved pulpit is unusually ugly. The rather gaudy and second-rate decorations in the church do much to spoil what is in reality a fine interior. There are a few pictures worth attention, including " The Madonna and Child with St. John " by Maes Canini.

The most pleasant way to reach, from St. Nicholas, the famous and historic Chateau des Comtes, perhaps the finest building of its kind in Belgium, is by the Marché aux Grains or Koornmarkt, along the Quai aux Herbes, with its picturesque houses, of which N° 16, the Maison des Bateliers, or guild-house of the watermen, built in 1531 by C. van den Berghe, with a restored Gothic façade; and the Maison de l'Étape du Blé, a XIIth century Romanesque building are particularly worthy of note. Then one can go through the Marché aux Poissons, and reach the grim-looking feudal chateau across the way, fronting on the picturesque Place St. Pharailde.

The chateau, which was from early times the fortress and residence of the Counts of Flanders, is said to date from the IXth century, and to

Château des Comtes
From Petit-Gewad

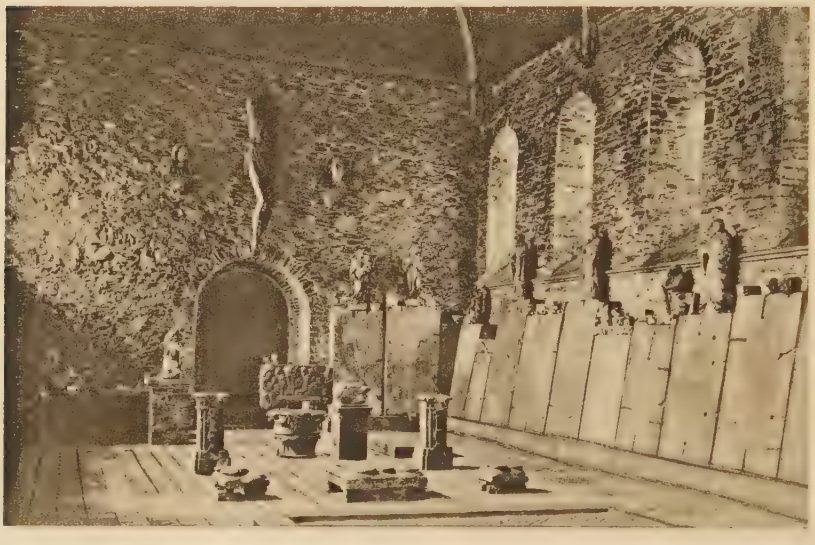
Statue Van Artevelde.

have been rebuilt towards the end of the XIIth by Count Philip of Alsace, after he returned from the Holy Land. From this time onwards it was the chief residence of the Counts. At the present day it is surrounded by water on three sides, and this strong, ancient, and most interesting building, with its huge grey-white walls and turrets and quaint roof, has only of recent years been restored to something approaching its former state.

Here it was that Edward

Ghent. — The Post Office, St. Nicholas, the Belfry and St. Bavon.

III and his Queen, Philippa, were entertained by Jacques Van Artevelde, in 1399, in such a lavish fashion that it is said their visit, of but comparatively few days duration, cost Van Artevelde and the city of Ghent a sum equal



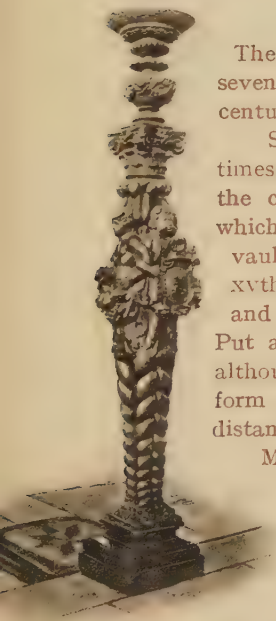
Ghent. — The Abbey of St. Bavon.

in present day money to nearly two hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

In the year 1407 the chateau became the seat of the Counts of Flanders, appointed by Phillip le Bon of Burgundy. It long remained an important building, playing its part in the municipal life of the city; and its vicissitudes down to the commencement of the XIXth century, were many, when it was strangely enough turned into a factory and afterwards into a mill. In 1887, however, the municipal authorities of Ghent realized that one of their chief historical and architectural treasures was being degraded and injured by the use to which it had been put. As a consequence it was acquired by the city.

As one enters this historic fortress-home of an age so remote from our own, whose aforetime owners were among the most powerful nobles in north western Europe, it is possible to realize more clearly the life of the Middle Ages. The donjon or keep contains a great banqueting hall in which it is probable Edward III, his Queen, and their brilliant retinue of knights and ladies were entertained.

Cloisters of St. Bavon.



The outer wall of the Chateau possesses no fewer than twenty-seven semi-circular towers, which date from the end of the XIIth century.

Several of the apartments in this fine old survival of feudal times preserve many of their medieval features. This is particularly the case with the underground room near the gatehouse, in which one discovers a very interesting example of Romanesque vaulting. The chapel, formerly the *consistorium*, dating from the XVth century; the huge, raftered chambers which were the Count's and Countess's bed-chambers; and the dungeon known as De Put are, perhaps, the chief features of interest for students, although as a whole the building is so singularly complete as to form a most valuable illustration of a fortified dwelling of those distant ages.

Most of those who visit the chateau experience a thrill as they stand in the crypt underneath the stables, which was formerly the torture chamber of the castle. In it doubtless many tragedies were enacted.

One can enjoy a delightful walk, with chances of

St. Bavon. One of the Candlesticks of Charles I.

The Adoration of the Lamb. (Détail)

discovering many examples of ancient houses, and the opportunity of visiting the Marché du Vendredi by way of the picturesque Quai de la Grue, on one's way to the ruins of the Abbaye de St. Bavon.

Detail of the Polyphych.

These have peculiar interest as constituting the oldest surviving portion of the original city of Ghent. Of all the numerons monastic institutions which Ghent in the Middle Ages possessed, many of which, as was the case with most other medieval towns, were outside its walls, that of St. Bavon was the most famous. As one stand samid the ruined cloisters of this once celebrated and beautiful abbey, it is not difficult to conjure up an approximate idea of the institution which, from the IXth century to the time of its suppression, played so considerable a

part, not alone in the life of the city, near the Antwerp gate of which its stood, but also in the life of Flanders itself.

The Abbey of St. Bavon, the remains of which are singularly beautiful and impressive, had not a few famous men at various times at its head, amongst them Eginnard, the son-in-law and biographer of the Emperor Charlemagne in the IXth century. It was in this abbey, by reason of the fact that

The Polyptich of the brothers van Eyck.

the Counts of Flanders had a right of hospitality, that Queen Philippa gave birth to John of Gaunt in 1340, although Oudenberg has often been mentioned as the place of John's birth.

The ruined abbey buildings, which formerly occupied an immense area of ground, have for their chief beauty the picturesque, partly Romanesque, but chiefly XVth century cloister, and through it one obtains a beautiful vista of the quadrangular garden, filled in summer with a perfect blaze of colour, and on the occasion of our last visit, gay with most of the popular and homely Flemish flowers, many of which are to be found in English cottage and country gardens.

The Chapel of St. Macaire, which is the name given to the octagonal Romanesque baptistery dating from about 1177, is worth study : and quite close by is the Chapter House, in rather a ruinous condition, with a Transition portal and window openings. Hard by in the pavement are a dozen interesting tombs of red sandstone, dating from the XIth or XIIth centuries.

Detail of the Polyptich.

The old refectory itself, which for a time served as the Church of St. Macaire, has been turned into a small museum containing amongst other things, unfortunately very much damaged, the tomb of Hubert Van Eyck.

One returns most pleasantly by way of the quais and bridges over the upper and lower Scheldt, by way of the Rue aux Vaches, to the Place Van Artevelde, and thence by the Rue Digue de Brabant to the Cathedral of St. Bavon. By this route one obtains a very good idea of the best portion of the more modern part of Ghent.

St. Bavon, to which, after the destruction of the Abbey the relics of the Saint were brought; except to students of architecture, is disappointing when first seen, and is a somewhat plain and massive building. It would appear that the Saint, from all that is known concerning him, which is very little, was of somewhat dubious reputation. He is legendarily described as a Duke of Brabant in the early days of Christianity in Flanders, but by some accounts he is stated to have been a noble of Hesbain, Liège, who passed the greater part of his early life as a soldier of fortune, and in what are euphemistically referred to as " worldly pleasures ". He however, became the Abbot of the Abbey of St. Bavon. After a while, finding the life not severe enough as a salve to his conscience, he fled with some companion monks and became a hermit, living in a hollow tree in a forest which at that period encircled a portion of the outskirts of Ghent. Ultimately he was canonised, and the burghers

of Ghent re-dedicated the Church of St. John to the local saint.

During the French Revolution the portal of the great west front was much damaged, and its statues thrown down from the niches they occupied. Three only were rescued and replaced.

One feature characteristic of Continental Gothic architecture may be noticed from the south side, where one finds in the externals of the nave, aisles, and choir the rounded or apsidal terminations in place of the square end which usually goes with English Gothic architecture.

The interior of the Cathedral is somewhat disappointing as a whole, although as one stands in it one is conscious of an appearance of lightness and loftiness. And the single aisles and short transepts in the Early Gothic Style give the building a certain dignity. Its massive pillars and the height of its arches certainly give it nobility and a sense of spaciousness.

Detail of the Polyptych.

In its pictures the church has a great treasure. Almost all the world has heard of the chief of these, the polyptych of Jan & Hubert Van Eyck, the subject of which is " The Adoration of the Lamb ". It is not only one of the greatest masterpieces of art, but by far the most important work possessed by Ghent. Unfortunately, it is seen at some considerable disadvantage in the church, and needs long and careful study before it can be thoroughly understood or appreciated.

Hubert, who has been called the inventor of oil-painting, was responsible for the greater part of the work. He had no real claim to that distinction however, although he may be said to have been the first artist to employ that particular process in its more developed form. Until the restoration, after the Armistice, of the original lower wings, which were for many years in Berlin, these had been replaced by very fair copies

made of Jan Van Eyck's work by Michael Coxie, of Malines. The painting was commissioned from Hubert Van Eyck by Josse Vydt, a wealthy burgher, and his wife Isabella, somewhere about the year 1420, Hence its presence in the side chapel of the family.

The great work was interrupted by the death of Hubert Van Eyck in 1426, and was not completed by his brother Jan until six years later.

The subject of the picture seems to have been inspired by the passage from the Apocalypse which commences : " I looked and behold a lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. "

In the central panel are seen the figures of the Lamb of God, standing upon an altar hung with red damask and covered with a white cloth, whilst His blood is seen flowing into a crystal chalice; the Holy Ghost descending upon Him in the form of a dove; and the Eternal Father appearing in the central panel on top. In the centre of the foreground is the Fountain of Life, from which pure water is flowing across the flower-bedecked fields of Heaven. Towards this centre four bands of worshippers are depicted wending their way. They are emblematical

Ghent. — The Law Courts.

Ghent. — The Château of Gérard le Diable.

Ghent. — Interior of the Petit Béguinage.

of (1) the secular portion of the Christian Church : (ii) the religious, as opposed to the secular, part of the Christian Church : (iii) the Christian martyrs : (iv)the Virgin martyrs, many of whom are seen bearing the palms of martyrdom in their hands.

In the more distant background are seen several cities, with many towers, which may be taken to represent the artist's conception of the New Jerusalem, but of course, Flemish, and not merely symbolical in character. The left wings form a continuation of the scene of the Prophets and of the Secular side of Christianity which is depicted in the centre panel. They are of especial interest as representing in the first half the various Orders of chivalry, and of the knighthood of the Middle Ages riding, as though on a pilgrimage, towards the central figure of the Lamb. The outer half of the picture represents a group of burgesses and merchants, among whom are two figures traditionally supposed to be portraits of the artists — Hubert riding the white horse, and Jan clad in a dark brown robe trimmed, with fur, riding behind him.

All who have the time to study the picture closely will be able in time to pick out for themselves the well and less well — known medieval characters and saints appearing in it. What should, however, be

Ghent. — Church of St. Jacques.

particularly noticed is the exquisite skill and detail which characterizes both the architecture and landscape work, the clarity of the sky, and the beautiful foliage of the trees, which give additional charm to those wonderfully interesting groups and portraits.

Ghent. — Cloisters of St. Bavon.

We have not space in which to discuss in further detail the remaining and less important portions of this world-famous picture. But it may be added that there are seven pictures in the upper tier, including the much discussed figures of Adam and Eve, the originals of which were removed at the instance, it is believed, of the Emperor Joseph II of Austria.

This wonderful composition as a whole contains upwards of two hundred figures, quite a number of which, in addition to those we have pointed out, can be readily identified by a careful and intelligent student.

The history of this fine altar piece, with the wonderfully interesting

additional paintings on the back of its wings (disclosed when shut) is a romantic one, On completion it was placed in the family chapel of the donor, where it now is : but during the Reformation it was taken for security to the Hotel de Ville. After the capitulation of the town to the Duke of Parma it was once more restored to its original position in the Cathedral. King Philippe II, indeed, wished to carry it away, but ultimately contented himself with a copy made by Michael Coxie, a portion of which copy has been used to build up the present triptych. The offending panels of Adam and Eve, when removed in 1784, were hidden at first in the sacristy, but ten years later the remaining portions of the triptych were carried off to Paris during the War of the Revolution, but after the peace were returned. Only the central portions, however, were replaced in Vydt's chapel. The wings, with the exception of the Adam and Eve panels, were sold to a Brussels dealer named Solly, who eventually re-sold them to the then King of Prussia, who deposited them in the Museum at Berlin. The original panels of Adam and Eve were than taken out of their hiding place, and exchanged by the ecclesiastical authorities for the wings of Michael Coxie — of a draped Adam and Eve — which were in the Brussels Museum.

Ghent. — Church of St. Pierre.

There is a fine altar-piece by Rubens in the tenth chapel, the subject of which is St. Bavon renouncing his wordly possessions on embracing the monastic life. It is said that the artist painted his own features as those of St. Amand who figures amongst the body of richly robed ecclesiastics. This altar-piece, although

Ghent. — St. Bavon and the Monument by the brothers Van Eycks.

wonderfully painted is in the artist's most free and flamboyant style, and thus fails to impress one with any deep sense of religious feeling.

The choir is a very fine portion of this in many ways noble and well-proportioned Cathedral. The beautiful grey stone arches, dating from the XIVth century, and the elegant triforium, and fine brick vaulting should all be noted.

Among the other churches of importance in Ghent which have interest, and some of them fine and noted pictures are St. Jacques, commenced in the XIIth century in the Romanesque style, to which the two western towers and the lower portion of the steeple over the crossing belong, and finished in the later part of the XVth century in the Gothic style. The marble tabernacle, about 1568, in the choir, and the painting of the Martyrdom of St. James on the high-altar by J. Van Boeckhorst are worth seeing.

The church of St. Pierre, the great dome of which attracts attention, is situated on a little hill in the southern portion of the city. It is a 1629-1719 Renaissance building containing a beautiful Louis XV choir screen, consisting of five gates of wrought iron by Maniel and good painting of the Raising of Lazarus by G. Seghers. The church of St. Etienne, with

Ghent. — Crypt of St. Bavon.

remarkably fine carved Renaissance confessionals lies to the north of the Chateau des Comtes.

Students in search of the famous Le Rabot, erected as a fort and gateway to commemorate the bravery of the Guilds in repulsing the attack made by the army of Frederick III in 1488, will only now discover two round towers and a high and picturesque gable end. But, the remains of Le Rabot are worth seeing.

There is one deeply interesting and secluded spot that should be visited by all for whom " abodes of ancient peace " have a charm. It stands near the Place Van Artevelde, and is reached by the poetically named Rue des Violettes. The Petit Béguinage de Notre Dame is a most interesting institution, with its tiny houses ranged round the sides of a large grassed and tree-shaded square or quadrangle. To-day the Béguinage contains some 300 sisters, and preserves much of its ancient character. It original foundation dates from the middle of the XIIth century. No male is, of course, admitted to the beautiful service held in the church, but by great good fortune we were once permitted to stand just within the porch, and witness the ceremony and follow the service that accompanied the receiving into the Order of a young béguine, who afterwards came out into the sun-lit quadrangle wearing the crystal crown, which

had been placed upon her head by the Mother Superior of the Order at the altar.

That day visitors were allowed at the neat and tiny houses of the nuns, and many a picturesque group was formed of the relatives and friends of the béguines as they stood chatting at the doorways of the houses, each of which has its own patron saint, whose name is inscribed above the portal.

Oudenarde. — Notre-Dame de Pamelle.

Many other interesting and ancient buildings cry for notice, but must be left to be discovered by the wanderer in this most historic and intriguing city. One, however, must be mentioned, the Old Steen of Gérard le Diable, which stands near the Cathedral, with its walls washed by the waters of the canal, and its grimness softened by its many high and graceful windows. It dates from the XIIIth century, and is the only remaining example in the city of the medieval fortified house.

The curious will find some beautiful, ancient and irregular-roofed houses by the canal side in the Het Saas quarter of the city.

From a town that at the end of the XVIIIth century had a population of less than 40,000, and but a tithe of that of its heyday of medieval prosperity, the city has to-day arisen, as it were, from the ashes of its ancient greatness to boast a population, including its suburbs, of upwards of 200,000 inhabitants.

As one makes one's way southward to the line of towns, stretching

from Furnes to Mons along the western frontier of Belgium, one may well pause at Oudenarde, an ancient town on the Scheldt, known for its linen and cotton manufacturies and once famous for its tapestries, which supplied in former times many of the workmen who wrought the world-famed Gobelins.

Oudenarde. — Hotel de Ville.

To-day, the birthplace of the famous Margaret of Parma, the town lives largely on its past glories : the population being less than 6000, where once there were tens of thousands. It is the site of one of Marlborough's notable victories in 1708.

Although there are a couple of churches and a few other buildings well-worth in the town, it seeing is to visit the most beautiful Hotel de Ville that most people come. This is Late Gothic, and one of the most exquisite specimens of its kind. On this delightful building one easily traces the influence of its larger and more famous prototype in Brussels, which dates from about a century earlier. The architects of the Hotel de Ville at Oudenarde were William de Ronde and Hendrik van Peede, a native of the town, who became of some considerable note. Owing to careful restoration, some twenty years ago, the building is now in an almost perfect state of preservation. The ground floor forms a pointed

Oudenarde. — Interior of the Hotel de Ville : Salle des Peuples.

hall, supported by columns, and there is an elegant arcade in the front of the building consisting of seven arches. There are two upper stories beneath the high-pitched roof, broken up by picturesque mansard windows. The tower in the centre of the building is of a charming and rich design, and the chimes which hang in it are of an unusually pleasant and musical tone, with the " mellowness of old bells oft rung ". The crown-shaped roof is surmounted by the figure of " John the Warrior ", who holds the banner of Flanders in his hand.

The Salle des Pas Perdus, on the first floor, is enriched by a very fine Late Gothic or Renaissance chimney piece, distinguished by some excellent and elaborate undercut stone and metal work of Peter van Schelden, dating from the first half of the XVIth century. The Council Chamber has a door

Oudenarde. — Carved door made the Hôtel de Ville.

Oudenarde. — Church of St. Walburga.

and portal also by Van Schelden, of most extraordinary richness of carving in the Renaissance style, which even the casual and unlearned sightseer can scarcely fail to admire and wonder at. In this chamber there is also a fine chimney-piece dating from 1529, by the same artist. The large central figure, under the basket work funnel, is that of the Virgin, on whose knees stands the Infant Christ.

We fancy the importance and interest of the two churches of Oudenarde are usually undervalued. Unfortunately they were seriously damaged by the German bombardment of the town, which in the Middle Ages clustered round its wonderful Hotel de Ville, and Churches, and at one time the city was almost equal to Ypres and Ghent in importance and commercial renown.

Both the churches, Notre Dame de Pamèle and St. Walburga are interesting to the student and important to the architect, as illustrating distinct periods of ecclesiastical architecture, that of the first named being an excellent example of the Pointed Style, soon after it had been evolved from the Romanesque, about the beginning of the XIVth century. The second is a blending of two distinct periods, and offers a strange but artistically picturesque whole.

The exterior of Notre Dame de Pamèle is not, perhaps, to the unlearned or to the casual observer, beautiful; it is even severe. But it has abiding interest for the student, for two widely divergent reasons. The first is that it forms a perfect example of the Early Pointed Style; the second because it was built from the designs and plans of Arnould de Binche, the earliest known Belgian artist, who made architecture a study as a profession.

The interior of the church generally effects a surprise for those who have been misled by its exterior. The stained glass in the church is so good that it is difficult at first to credit that it is modern.

There is a particularly beautiful fountain on the quay bordering the Scheldt not far from Notre Dame. The early XIIIth century building, now the Theatre, near the Hotel de Ville, was formerly the Cloth Hall.

The Church of St. Walburga stands on the south western side of the Grande Place, and dates from the XIIth to XVth centuries. It is partly Romanesque and partly Gothic. It is an interesting building, which combines work of two very distinct architectural periods. Its fine tower rises to a height of 322 ft. but is spoiled somewhat by the inadequate lantern. It is believed that a vast scheme of reconstruction was once contemplated, with the object of converting the church into a First Pointed building. The work was, however, abandoned. As it stands, with its grand and vast nave, and the unfinished transepts overshadowing the more modestly proportioned choir, it affords a wonderfully interesting object lesson of the lines upon which the medieval architect proceeded, when engaged upon the task of replacing a small and unimposing building with one of larger and more impressive dimensions.

Ghent. — Château des Comtes : Salle des Fêtes et de Justice.

In the Forest of Soignes.

Ypres. The Cloth Hall before the war.

CHAPTER IV

Some Historic Towns of West Flanders and Hainault. Furnes - Dixmude - Ypres - Courtrai - Tournai Mons - Charleroi

As one leaves the long sandy beaches and grey-green and yellow sand dunes of the coast, which stretch in an almost unbroken line, save for Ostend and smaller harbours and inlets, from Sluys to Dunkirk, one comes upon a series of historic and in many respects beautiful towns, along the southern border of Belgium. Towns, some of them now-a-days scarcely more than names after the ravages of War; others greatly damaged; and others happily very much as they have been for centuries. All, however, claim, for one reason or another at least a note.

Furnes, to the south-west of Nieuport, but a kilometre or two inland,

played an important role in the great War, having been the Belgian H. Q· and suffered considerable material damage by bombardment.

It, even before the War, might be said to sleep throughout most of the year. Few visitors come to it except on the last Sunday in July when it awoke to life during the great Procession de Pénitence which winds its way through the narrow streets into the Grande Place, and still draws (as it has since the xth century when it was instituted) crowds of pilgrims comprising the social butterflies of Ostend, the burghers of Bruges, Ghent, Courtrai, Tournai, and other towns, and country-folk from far and near.

This famous Flemish Festival is organized by the members of the Confrérie de la Sodalité ", who proceed through the ancient streets in costumes forming tableaux which represent the Story of the Passion. It is an impressive sight, and one not easily forgotten by those who witness it, and form units of the great crowd that always throngs the streets of Furnes and its Grande Place on this occasion.

Furnes. — Hôtel de la Noble Rose.

The Grande Place of Furnes is a fine one. Indeed, the town seems to be inadequate now-a-days to its Grande Place. The interesting row of gabled XVIth and XVIIth centuries houses on the north side though greatly damaged are being wisely restored, and, with the skill that is being expended on such works in Belgium, reconstruct for us much of the charm of architecture of the ages from which they date. The chief church, that of St. Walburga dominates the view. It stands on the site of a IXth century building founded by Baldwin of the

Furnes. — The Hôtel de Ville.

Iron Arm who was also the progenitor of the famous line of the Counts of Flanders who, in the XTH and XITH centuries, played so important a part in the history particularly of the north and western part of what is now known as the Kingdom of Belgium. The church was commenced somewhere about the beginning of the XIVTH century, and was completed about a century later. It was undoubtedly planned upon a scale of size and magnificence such that the resources of the people and ecclesiastics of the town proved to be inadequate to carry out. Thus it is that the building is incomplete consisting merely of the choir and the chapels attached thereto.

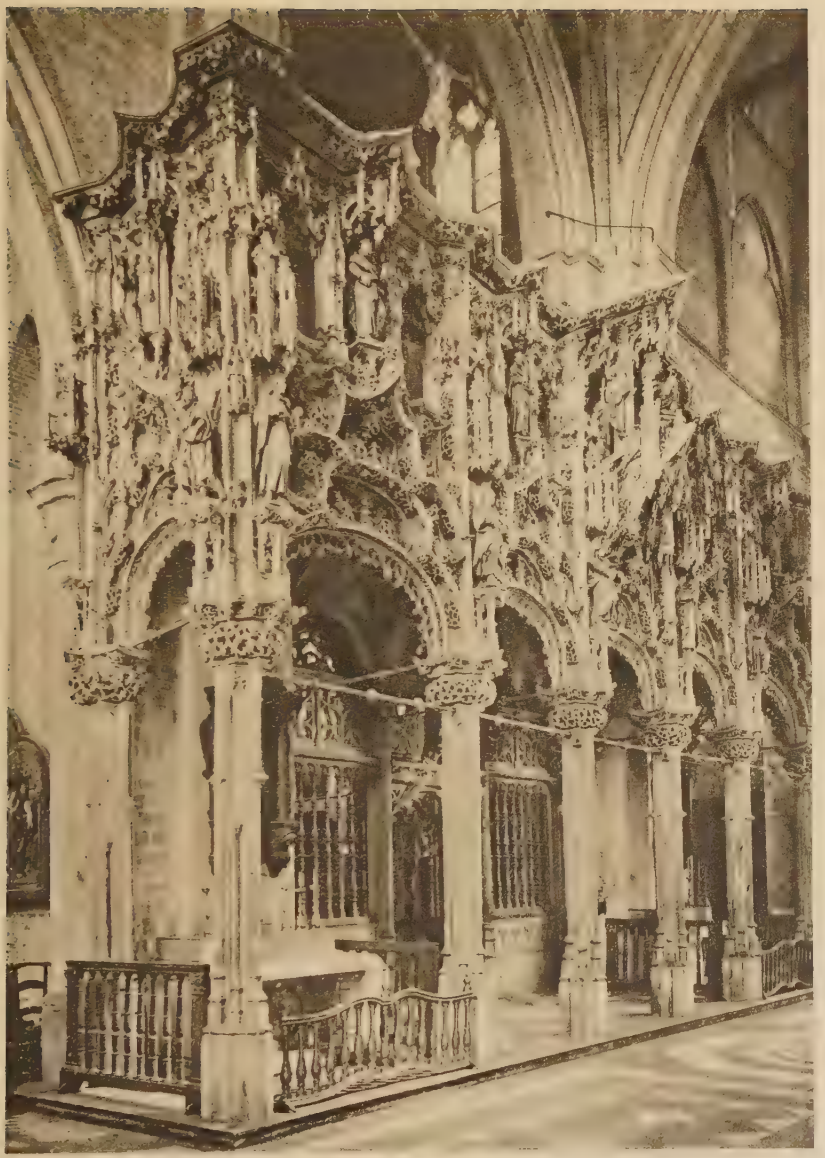
The Hotel de Ville has a striking Renaissance façade dating from the close of the XVITH to early XVIITH century. The XVIITH century Belfry stands behind it; and the Palias de Justice adjoins. In this interesting group of ancient buildings are many things worth seeing. One finds for example in the Hotel de Ville some fine wall hangings of Spanish leather, which may date from the days of the short-lived occupation of the town by the Spaniards after it had been captured by Sfondrato in July 1648. One should not overlook the fine chimneypiece, with decorations, probably incorrectly attributed to Snyders; and there is some good tapestry, and two particularly fine doorways.

Dixmude. — St-Nicolas and the Hôtel de Ville.

The present-day Palais de Justice, was formerly the old Chatellenie erected from designs by Sylvanus Boulin in 1612-1628. It was in the raftered antechamber on the first floor known as the " Salle des Pas Perdus " that the Inquisition used to hold its sittings. And tradition states that it was also in this chamber that the rack was set up, and the terrible sentences of torture carried out.

In pre-War days one of the great attractions of Furnes to those of artistic and antiquarian tastes was its ancient hostelry which bears the charming name of the Hôtel de la Noble Rose. It was unhappily greatly damaged by bombardment during the War, and is only recently restored. It stands just off the market place, and is one of the oldest existing inns in Flanders. Most of the interior dates from the early XVIth century, and the fabric itself is probably much older. The sojourner in Furnes even of to-day will be able to discover many quaint bits of architecture, and that atmosphere of ancient days which intrigues one, and lures one on to the exploration of ancient towns.

Thousands come yearly to this corner of Belgium, now a great waste of historic battlefields, which was once a pleasant though flat stretch of country dotted here and there with picturesque farms, and cultivated

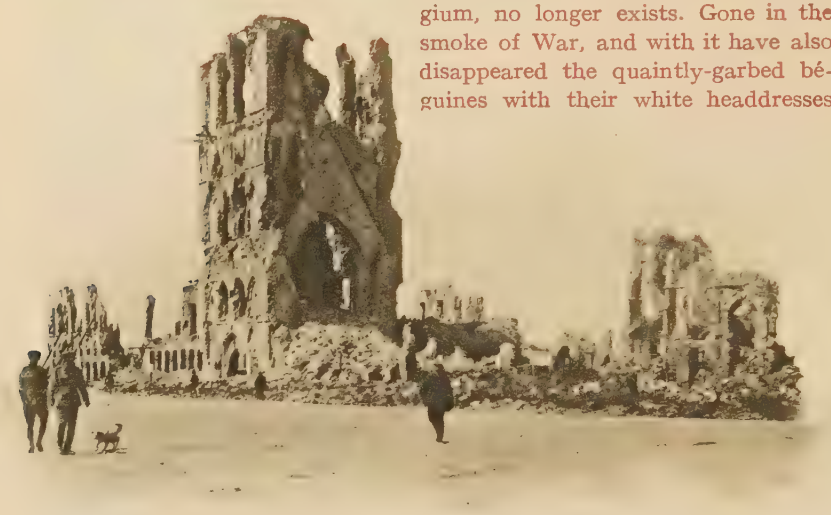


Dixmude. — Rood Loft of 1540.

— comparatively poor though was the soil — with marvellous industry, and in many ways astonishing results.

Dixmude, with its charming air of old-world peace is gone. Indeed, it is impossible to reconstruct any of its quaint and picturesque features other than by imagination. But the salt freshness is still in the air, and as one stands on its site one remembers the deeds of valour that have surely consecrated its soil.

Then the quaint and charmingly picturesque Béguinage, one of the most beautiful and peaceful in Belgium, no longer exists. Gone in the smoke of War, and with it have also disappeared the quaintly-garbed béguines with their white headdresses



Ypres. — The Ruins of the Cloth Hall.

who flitted in and out the houses, which were so charming, with the whitened walls enclosing them and seemed almost as though taken out of a box of toys.

Formerly one came to Ypres from Dixmude through a fertile stretch of country thick with dairy farms, set amid geometrically-planned fields and sometimes having clumps of trees sheltering them from the prevailing winds which sweep across the low-lying fields of West Flanders almost unbrokenly. Now one comes to the place where Ypres stood across vast spreading cemeteries, and fields that are not as of yore, but are yet again bearing crops in due season.

Ypres. — La Grande Place, the Cloth Hall and Church of St. Martin.

To-day the wonders of Ypres are not its magnificent XIIIth century Cloth Hall and Hôtel de Ville, commenced by Count Baldwin, who was responsible for many fine and interesting buildings; nor its beautiful and gracious Church of St. Martin; nor even its charming Hotel Merghelynck, which stood at the corner of the Rue de Lille, and the Marché aux Vieux Habits (Old Clothes Market), and built during the latter half of the XVIIIth century, re-constructed for one, in its complete furnishing with articles of that period, the domestic life led by people of that age. The interest of the old city, now a collection of ruins and temporary buildings, is that of memories full of regret and poignancy, and of glories and marvellously beau-

Ypres. Old façades.

Ypres. — St. Martin's before the War.

tiful things passed away. It may be that some day a Cloth Hall will be buitl on the plan of the old, that a marvellous reconstruction may arise, phœnix-like, from the ruins and ashes, but the spirit of the old building, its fascination, its maturity will be lacking.

It was surely a marvellous work that Count Baldwin initiated. Imagine a building under whose span of exquisite Gothic architecture were both the Cloth Hall, which had played so important a part in the ancient prosperity of this cloth-weaving city, and the magnificent Hôtel de Ville. It had a total length of façade but a few feet short of that of

Ypres. Maison Biebuyck.

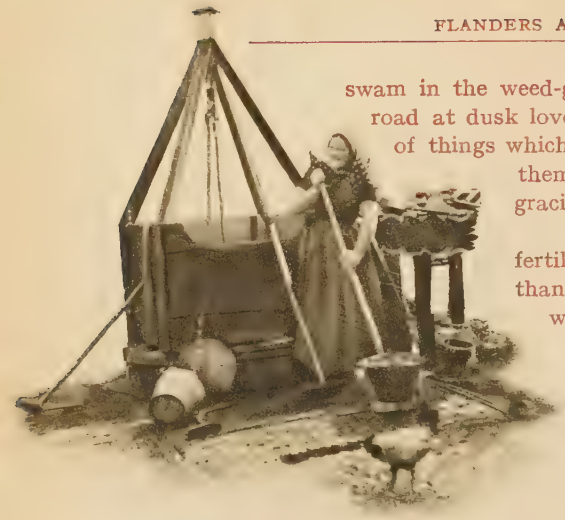
the National Gallery in London. It was pierced by singularly elegant and beautiful windows, the lower tier of which were set within pointed arches, and separated by finely formed groups of clustered shafts, with the heads graced with rich tracery and bearing a quatrefoil; the uppe row of windows loftier and more acutely formed of even richer traceries, with quatrefoil and trefoil alternating in their heads. The centrally-placed, fine and impressive belfry, in the steeply inclined roof, with its crocket'ed pinnacles at the four corners, possessed an octagonal spire of most elegant proportions.

Ypres. An Old wood House.

At the rear of the beautiful and immense Cloth Hall stood the Cathedral of St. Martin. Its western tower was never finished, and the church was in a measure overshadowed by its neighbour the Cloth Hall. It was for two and a half centuries the Cathedral, from 1559-1801, and was, it is generally believed, founded in 1073 by Robert le Frison. No mere description can conjure up, to the minds of those who never had the opportunity of seeing it, the beauty and impressiveness of this magnificent church. In it the tracery of no two windows was alike.

There can be no other Ypres. Even the almost uncanny skill of Belgian architects and builders evidenced in many reconstructions, could not, even if it were desired, reconstitute that beautiful and historic city, with its many interesting and significant survivals of past ages, when master builders designed with spirit and craftsmen wrought the fabric.

The shattered Menin gate, outside which in pre-War days the swans



A Dairy in Flanders.

swam in the weed-grown moat, and along whose dusty road at dusk lovers walked, is an immortal fragment of things which have passed away, leaving behind them poignant memories ofbeautiful and gracious buildings, and of gallant deeds

One leaves .Ypres by a pleasant and fertile stretch of country, more undulating than that of many parts of Belgium, which one traverses to reach Courtrai.

As one crosses the Lys and ascends the main street, which leads to the Grande Place round and in the immediate vicinity of which the principal buildings of the picturesque old town have grouped themselves, one catches a glimpse down the river of the grim-looking twin towers known as the " Broeltoren ", with the ancient bridge between them spanning the almost currentless stream.

There is an air of activity and animation about Courtrai not found in many of the old-world towns which lie scattered in West Flanders. Its forty thousand or so inhabitants must obviously do something, and as a matter of fact they manufacture linen and deal in flax, for which the town has been noted from time immemorial.

There is an air of solid prosperity about the town, and in the houses of the principal inhabitants which are situated in the streets lying parallel with the river, and between it and the sombre, though beautiful, church of St. Martin. Behind their discreetly curtained and shuttered windows, large fortunes in the past have been made by industry, and frugality of living and by means of the flax which grows in the fields outside the town.

Beneath the very walls a little more than six hundred years ago — to be exact, on July 11th 1302 — was fought

The Country near Ypres.

Courtrai. — The Canal.

the famous Battle of Spurs. The name arose from the immense quantity of golden spurs picked up on the field of battle, some accounts mention 800 as the number.

It is said that these found on the field after the battle and taken from the slain knights, were hung up as trophies in a monastery church since destroyed.

The two chief churches of Courtrai are both of considerable interest. That of St. Martin containing some work of the last decade of the XIVth century, is near the picturesque Béguinage, and forms a remarkable example of the blending of German with French methods of ecclesiastical architecture, with an impressive and pleasing result. The church is spacious and dignified, and the elegant and delightful choir never fails to charm the eye of the unlearned as well as that of the student. There is a beautiful portal at the western end of the church, but one is a little disappointed with the details of this end which lack grace and purity. The French style, more graceful and of earlier date, prevails in the choir, and one finds a low triforium arcade and an elegant clerestory here. The apse is three-sided, and the clerestory and arcading is continued round them, but there is no ambulatory. In the two tiers of windows one is

A Peasant of Courtrai.

reminded of Ratisbon Cathedral, and the tracery in these, the lower tier of four lights, the upper of three, is light and effective.

The church contains a considerable amount of good carving of Flemish flamboyant work, of which the screens in several bays of the choir are typical examples, harmonising admirably with the beautiful and elegant late Gothic stone tabernacle, which stands in the centre of the third arch on the north side. The pulpit is a notable one of carved wood with a sounding board. It is XVIth century work, which, with the tabernacle of like date, was happily rescued from the destructive fire which greatly damaged the church in 1862. The stained glass though beautiful and in good taste is modern.

Harvest.

The Church of Notre Dame is older than St. Martin's, having been founded in 1211, by Count Baldwin of Flanders, at the time of the Fourth Crusade. Unfortunately this building was carelessly restored and injudiciously modernized in the XVIIIth century. Although the church, which is cruciform in shape, is short, and has only two bays to the nave, the building out of chapels on the north and south sides has served to give it the appearance of much greater size and importance. There is a bell turret on the west gable of the latter chapel which, it will be observed, groups very effectively with the steeples flanking the western

A mill.

Courtrai. The Tours de Brœl.

façade. Among the most interesting medieval features of the interior are the round columns of the apsidal choir, which have four small shafts grouped round them, with foliated capitals; the windows of the transept with their inner planes of tracery and four lights; the two lateral chapels, and some of the smaller details.

The church is rich in the possession of a masterpiece by Van Dyck — one of the best of his religious paintings — " The Elevation of the Cross ". A veritable romance is attached to this picture, for some fifteen years ago it was stolen, by two men named Carlier and Vizfaille, with the intention of shipping the stolen masterpiece to the United States. The thieves got clear away with their booty after they had cut it out of the frame, but were captured in the vicinity of Bruges through the intelligence and promptitude of a peasant,

A Farm near Courtrai.

Courtrai. — The Béguinage.

who saw them trundling a roll of sacking in a barrow which they were evidently anxious should not attract too much attention. The painting had been somewhat damaged by the rough treatment it had received, but was carefully restored by a famous Antwerp picture-restorer, and is now once more safely housed in the south transept of the church.

One of the most interesting features of this fine church is the chapel of St. Catherine, which is also known as the Chapelle des Comtes, built in 1374 against the south wall. It is lighted by seven tall windows, and is groined from slender shafts without capitals. Although the stained glass in these windows is of comparatively modern date, it is, like that in the church itself, of remarkably good quality. The bas-reliefs of the panels in the trefoiled blank arches which relieve the walls underneath the windows are remarkable. They represent the Seven Mortal Sins, and present a series of figures and subjects of considerable singularity. The XIVth century wall paintings of the chapel, represent the Counts and Countesses of Flanders.

The Béguinage, which is not far rom St. Martin's, is picturesquely situated. The name Béguinage, it may be noted, was most probably derivéd from that of Lambert le Bégue, a Liège priest, who is reputed to have founded the first institution of the kind in the year 1180. The objects

Courtrai. — The Hôtel de Ville.

for which these foundations were created were the leading of a religious life coupled with deeds of charity, and benevolence to the poor, the Béguines, unlike the nuns of strict order, being permitted to leave the precincts of the Béguinage to perform their acts of charity.

For many who come to Courtrai, as for ourselves, the fine Gothic Town Hall, erected in the early part of the xvith century, and standing on the north-west side of the Grande Place, will have great attraction. If for nothing else Courtrai would be worth visiting on account of the marvellous chimney pieces in its town hall. That in the interesting Salle Échevinale on the ground floor is a very handsome example of xvith century, Renaissance work; adorned with coats of arms of the standard-bearers of knights of the town; a figure of the Virgin; and statues of the Archduke Albert of Austria and his wife, Clara Isabella Eugenia, daughter of Philip II of Spain; and the coats of arms of the allied cities of Bruges and Ghent. On the walls above the oak panelled dado are some well-painted and interesting frescoes by Gottfried Guffens, of Hasselt, and Jan P. Swerts, of Antwerp, representing scenes from the history of Flanders. They include "The Departure of Count Baldwin IV for the Fourth Crusade in 1202", a spirited work of excellent colou-

ring; and " The Flemish Leaders holdings a Council of War " in the Court Room on the day before the Battle of Spurs, a century later.

One finds in the Council Chamber, which is on the first floor, one of the most remarkable and perfect Flamboyant Flemish chimneypieces in Belgium. It is very richly carved, and dates from 1527. It has three rows of beautifully carved and elaborate statuettes, representing the virtues and vices, and the punishments awarded for the latter. The three statues placed upon corbels represent Charles V with the Infanta Isabella of Spain on the right, and a figure of Justice on the left. The old plans of the town and suburbs, dating from 1641 and done in oils, which are on the walls of the chamber, are curious and interesting.

It was in this Council Chamber that six hundred years ago the burgher leaders of Courtrai and Bruges sat around the table and drew up their plans of defence and attack, which resulted in the defeat of the French forces, and the freeing of the city from the menace which had threatened.

As at Bruges so at Courtrai the town derives not a little of its picturesqueness from its waterways. Along the Rue Guido Gezelle, or by the way of the town bridge, and then along the left bank of the Lys, one reaches the ancient structure which connects the two fine round towers, known as Les Tours du Broel or Broel Toren. These are one of the most interesting architectural survivals in Courtrai. In the right hand tower is housed a small but interesting Museum of Antiquities, containing, amongst other things, some fine and interesting specimens of Flanders lace — for which the town was and is still famed — engravings, etc.

Courtrai. — Chimney piece in the Council Chamber.

A walk along the left bank of the river takes one into the land of the flax industry, and one obtains a most picturesque backward view, ere turning a corner, of the massive old Tours du Broel and a silhouette of the distant town between them.

In the fields where the flax is piled in small ricks after

drying, and in the linen bleaching grounds one sees many a picture such as Millet would have delighted to paint : groups of men and women pursuing the industry which made Courtrai famous when the world was young.

One can follow a pleasant road if one journeys to Tournai by motor, or cycle. It passes through undulating and pretty country which fortunately experienced little of the most distressful and destructive results of war. At length one comes across the Scheldt, upon which Tournai stands, and with it the water meadows which are so prominent a feature of this part of Belgium.

Courtrai. — The Belfry.

The ancient city of Tournai, far-famed in former days for its wood carvers, is built on both banks of the river, and occupies an unusually commanding position in that it stands a hundred feet above sea level. It is not only one of the most ancient cities in Belgium, dating, as *Civitas Nerviorum*, from the time of Julius Caesar, but was, in the vth century, the capital of the Merovingian kings of the Salic Franks, who during the 3rd century had established themselves in the hill-country of Belgium, and more particularly in the district between the Meuse and the lower Rhine. Nowadays it is a flourishing place of some 40.000 inhabitants.

Besieged many times, one of its most romantic historical episodes is commemorated in the fine monument to Marie de Lalaing, Princess

Tournai. — The Church of St-Quentin.

d'Epinoy, which strikes one immediately one enters the Grande Place. The Princess defended the town with astonishing skill and courage against the forces of Alexander, Duke of Parma, in 1581.

The ancient walls, which served the town so well long ago in sieges, are now-a-days laid out as promenades, from which one obtains delightful views of the town and its outskirts.

For English people of historical bent the fact that Tournai was the birthplace of the pretender Perkin Warbeck will have interest. In ancient times it was noted for its copper and brass work, and towards the close of the XVIIth century, and onwards for a period of about a century and a half, for its tapestries, faience, and porcelain manufactories. Nowadays the chief industries are weaving and embroidering. The weavers many of them work in their own homes, and one can often in the by-streets hear the "purring" of the hand looms, and see them working through the open windows.

Around its irregularly-shaped, but, on the whole, triangular Grande Place, are grouped the fine Early Gothic Church of St. Quentin, which, is so charming in architecture as to be known as "La Petite Cathedrale"; the Cloth Hall; and the Belfry, which is thought to date from the end of the XIIth century, while near by is the Cathedral of Notre Dame, a truly magnificent example of XIth century architecture.

It is difficult, indeed, to speak in measured terms of this beautiful and most impressive building. Many, consider that this wonderful church

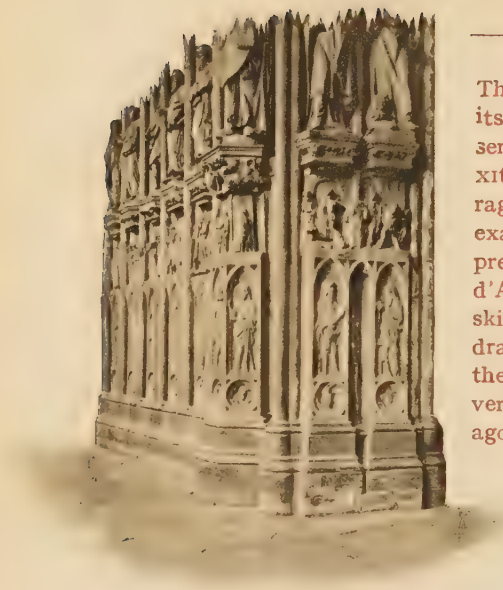
is the finest and most architecturally satisfying in Belgium; not even excepting those of Malines, Bruges, and Antwerp.

The charm and grandeur of the building arises not alone from its fine central tower, which seems to dominate the town, but also from the four other singularly placed and elegant lateral steeples, the extraordinary extent of its Romanesque nave and apsidal transepts, and the most impressive proportions of its choir of the Middle Pointed period. It stands boldly on rising ground on the southern bank of the Scheldt Canal which separates the city into two almost equal halves.

At the end of the vth century the conversion of Clovis to Christianity permitted the return to Tournai of St. Eleutherius, who when a persecution had broken out some years before, had been compelled to flee first to Blandinium and then to Rome. The saint was a native of Tournai, after his death his remains were eventually brought to Tournai, and are interred in the beautiful, though badly placed Early Gothic tomb in the Cathedral.

In the ixth century Tournai was several times pillaged by the Normans, the inhabitants fled and did not return for nearly a century. There seems little doubt but that the cathedral was in part destroyed.

Tournai. — Pont des Trous.

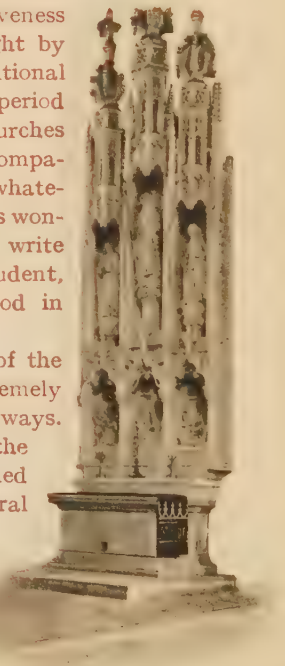


Sculpture in Tournai Cathedral.

There is good reason for believing that its rebuilding and restoration was not seriously undertaken until well on in the XIth century. At various times there have raged fierce controversies regarding the exact age of the earliest portions of the present building. One authority, M. L. d'Anstaign, who devoted much time and skill to the historical records of the Cathedral, quoted in his notable volume upon the subject a XVIth century MS., discovered about three quarters of a century ago, in which the statement is made that the nave was dedicated on May 9, 1066, the year in which several other magnificent churches were founded.

From the south west corner of the Grande Place the group of five spires and their environment gives to the church an impressiveness and dignity which cannot fail to be noted with delight by even the least learned observer. Formerly an additional pair of towers flanked the eastern apse, and at that period the effect must have, indeed, been beautiful. Few churches have given rise to so much controversy regarding the comparative merits of different portions of their fabric. But whatever the disparagers of Notre-Dame de Tournai, and its wonderfully impressive choir in particular may say or write regarding it, to the ordinary visitor, and even to the student, it remains one of the finest buildings of the period in Belgium.

One of the most interesting exterior features of the Cathedral for most people will undoubtedly be the extremely curious sculptures found on the north and south doorways. They are placed in a blank semi-circular arch above the first named door, which is enclosed in another arch formed by the three curves, in shape like a trefoil. The central curve of the latter being higher than the other two is formed by two curves, which, as they meet



Tournai : a reliquary in the Cathedral

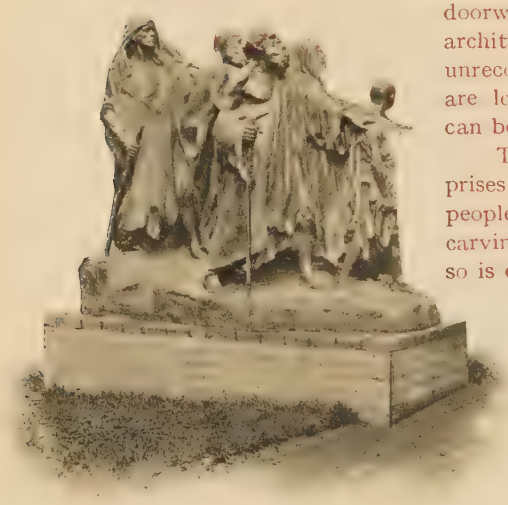
The Cathedral of Tournai.

Swans at Tournai.

in a point, produce the true ogee. The jambs beneath these are also richly carved.

Unfortunately, the sculptures which are seen on the flat of the doorway, enclosed by the jambs and the architrave, are so defaced as to be almost unrecognizable. At the sides the sculptures are less injured and the subjects of some can be distinguished.

The exterior band of mouldings comprises palmettes, masks, and griffins. Some people have been accustomed to regard these carvings as barbarous and rough, but to do so is entirely to overlook the intention and astounding decorative skill of their producers of long ago. It would indeed, be difficult to find examples of similar sculptures which excel them in the spirit and precision



Tournai. — The Blind leading the Blind, by Rodin.

of their workmanship, or the grotesque excellence and forcefulness of the ideas portrayed.

As M. de Caumont says regarding the Tournai sculptures : " At all periods imagination has been one of the chief elements of art, and one must for this reason not be astonished if one finds in the ornamentation of the Middle Ages conventional figures like those one has also found in the architecture of Greece and in that of Rome. "

Tournai. — Interior of the Cathedral.

Upon entering the Cathedral one cannot fail to be impressed with a sense of its grandeur, the severe and solid-looking Romanesque nave contrasting with remarkable effect with the Gothic choir, and Transitional transepts.

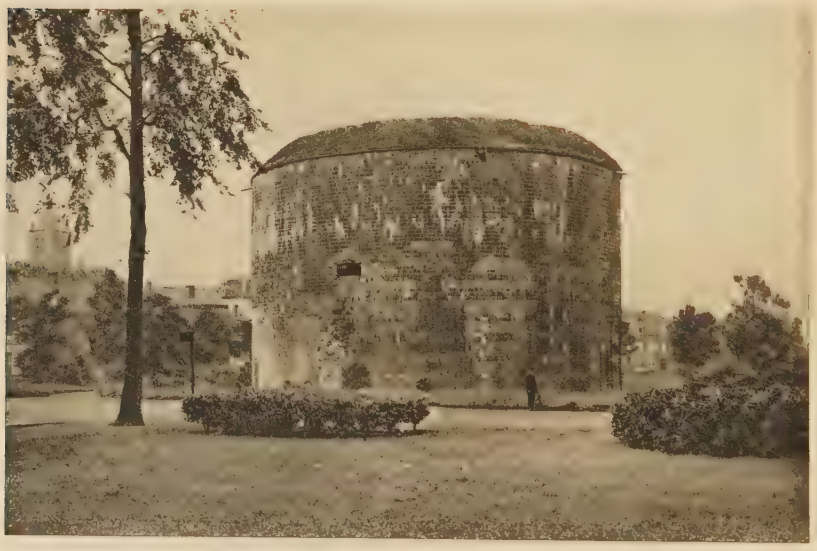
The choir presents a great contrast, indeed, with the severity of the nave. Here one has an astonishing access of light, provided by windows filled with stained glass, separated the one from the other only by slender piers, and mullions of rod-like tenuity. The triforium is most elegant, and contrasts sharply with the vast and somewhat dim gallery of the nave, and large clerestories take the place of the arcades surmounting the gallery of the latter, and the aisles below it.

Another great contrast is afforded by the nave and choir aisles. The former are but dmily lighted by the windows which are placed high up in the wall. The latter, on the contrary, are illuminated by huge

glazed spaces which scarcely strike one at first as windows, that are divided by the narrow buttresses. Of walls proper there are none. There are five trigonal chapels radiating from the eastern end, lighted in the same way, and being open to the choir aisle or chevet, they give an unusual appearance to this portion of the building.

Perhaps the best and most satisfying view of all of the interior of this wonderful building is obtained from the western doors. One is conscious that much of its charm arises in no small measure from the skilful manner in which the effect of light and shade has been brought about by the use of beautiful stained glass in the choir, which though modern is of fine colouring and design. So that when looking along the dimly lighted nave the eye takes in the eastern portion of the building, which even on a bright summer's day is filled with ambient and subdued light, that spreads out behind the XVIIIth century group of St. Michael in combat with the Evil One, by Nicolas Lecreux, a native of Tournai, which, fashioned in dark bronze, rises above the screen, and materially assists in the pleasing and even impressive effect of the whole.

Among the pictures and treasures of the Church worth noting are the painting on the wall of one of the chapels in the ambulatory, repre-



Tournai. — The Tower of Henry VIII.

Tournai. — La Grande Place.

senting. " The Triumph of Death ", a very favourite XVIth century subject; and the large painting by Rubens in the first chapel, commencing on the right side of the rood-loft, the subject of which is " The Rescue of Souls from Purgatory, " an imposing composition, which, however, bears unmistakable traces of having been recklessly restored. In the chapel of St-Louis — the first of the south right side — is a Jordaens : " The Crucifixion. " In a further chapel there is an interesting series of pictures : " Scenes from the Life of the Virgin Mary, " by Lancelot Blondeel, the XVIth century painter and architect of Bruges.

The notable shrine of the Virgin, or Châsse de Notre-Dame, a fine early XIIIth century work in painted and gilded wood by Nicholas de Verdun, with scenes from the life of Christ in bas-reliefs and medallions, stands to the right of the high altar. On the other side of the sanctuary is the famous shrine or reliquary of St. Eleutherius, also late Romanesque, and dating probably a quarter of a century later than that of the Virgin. This châsse is an exceedingly beautiful example of the goldsmith's art of the period.

The Treasury of the Cathedral contains a fine and most interesting collection of ancient vestments. Among which is a chasuble, traditionally

A House in West Flanders.

supposed to have been given to the Cathedral by Thomas à Becket, who visited the city in 1165. There is also a notably beautiful ivory crucifix attributed to Jerome Duquesnoy, who lived in the first half of the XVIIth century.

The three other churches of Tournai — St. Quentin, St. Nicholas, and St. Jacques — all form interesting examples of the bold, though rather coarse, Early Pointed styles of architecture, which so much prevailed in this part of Belgium in the XIIIth century. The towers of the two latter are very graceful, and the churches — chiefly First Pointed — have several features in common. Perhaps

Scène on a Flemish Farm.

Cottage near Courtrai.

the most readily remarked is the clerestory with its lancet windows set behind a continuous arcade.

Near the ancient church of St. Brice on the eastern side of the river and best reached from the Cathedral by the Place St. Pierre, Rue des Puits de l'Eau, and Rue de Pont, was discovered in May, 1653, in the foundations of a house just pulled down, an ancient burial place about six feet below the surface. Upon opening it, two men's skulls were found, and some bones.

But the most important discovery was the large gold ring bearing a seal, upon which was engraved a man's figure surrounded by the lettering " CHILDERICI REGIS ". This served to identify the remains as those of Childeric. Thus was accidentally discovered the long-lost grave of the great king.

Among the other buildings of Tournai of note is the interesting Renaissance Cloth Hall, now partly used as a Municipal Museum and Art Gallery. Among the pictures are many of the Tournai school. Some of the best represent stirring incidents in the history of the city.

There are still left in Tournai some good and interesting examples of medieval domestic architecture to reward the searcher in the by-ways.

Mons. — The Hôtel de Ville.

In the Rue de Paris, near the Belfry, is an excellent example; and at the northern end of the Place Verte stands the Tower built by Henry VIII, who captured the town in 1513, after the second Battle of Spurs. The road out of Tournai to Mons is pleasant and even picturesque as far as Antoign and Peruwelz, after which one enters the grim and dusty Borinage.

As one approaches Mons, past an occasional field green with weeds as often as with grass; past vistas of huge chimney stacks, the network of aerial tramways of the mines, and most curious and impressive of all, vast mounds

Mons. — Lock on one of the doors of the Hôtel de Ville.

Mons. — The Belfry.

Mons. — La Grande Place.

and pyramids of slag — hundreds of thousands of tons of this refuse the beginnings of which no man can remember, and amid which some of the most bloody fighting of the earliest days of the War took place; one realizes, perhaps, for the first time that there is a modern industrial side to this wonderful country of ancient cities and old-world things.

Amid these pyramids, except for the absence of the clarity of Egyptian atmosphere, one might almost imagine as the red sun sinks behind them, and the sky takes on, first a golden yellow, and then a purple as of Egypt itself, that one was looking upon the Pyramids.

The Borinage district, in the centre of which Mons stands, cannot be considered as otherwise than terrible. It is the " under-world " of the industrial life of Belgium, such as might inspire a modern Dante to write a modern " Epic of Hades ".

But though this district is so grim, sombre, and in a sense terrifying to more sensitive souls, it has an immortal interest for Belgians, English, and French because of the part it played in those great and poignant days of 1914 when the fate of Western Europe, as well as that of Belgium and France, hung in the balance.

Mons, the capital of Hainault, stands high above the Trouille, though

the country round about is not really hilly, nor is the road to it from Tournai.

Mons to-day still bears some of the scars of War, but it is a pleasant and bustling town of some thirty thousand inhabitants, combining with its modern air some features of ancient times. The real centre of life is the Grande Place in the upper town, which from 1914-1918 saw so constant a coming and going of troops, and in the August and September days of the first named year echoed to the constant roar and rumble of near or distant artillery. Here, on Trinity Sunday and under the shadow of the ancient citadel, takes place in each year the quaint Medieval Fête known as La Parade du Lumeçon, in which a contest with a dragon, somewhat reminiscent of St. George and the Dragon, figures largely.

The Hôtel de Ville of Mons is an interesting though uncompleted Late Gothic building. It dates from the middle half of the xvth century, and a fine Gothic room, with large paintings illustrative of the history of the town, the work of Modeste Carlier, Hennebicq, and Paternostre, which are worth seeing.

On either side of the Hotel de Ville is an interesting building with Renaissance front; one the Maison de la Toison d'Or, and the other the Chapel of St. George.

The fine Late Gothic Cathedral is undoubted the "lion" of the town. It is dedicated to St. Waltrudia, and is one of the few great churches of Belgium which

Mons. — The Dolez Statue.

Mons. — The Church of St. Waltruda.

has escaped disfigurement by plaster and whitewash. For this reason it presents a very interesting example of the true decoration — simple but effective and pleasing — of the time.

It was begun in the middle of the xvth century from designs by the famous architect of the beautiful and famous Hotel de Ville at Louvain, Matthew de Layens.

The building is distinguished both inside and out for boldness and elegance of design, the flying buttresses with their crocketted pinnacles being a notable feature of the exterior elevation. Slender clustered columns sixty in number, rising without capitals to the vaulting and keystones, at once attract the eyes, and the general effect of the interior is one of spaciousness and elegance. The church is lighted by no less than ninety windows, and under those of the nave and transepts is a very tasteful triforium. The rich, though modern, reliquary of the patron saint of the church, who died in 685, is behind the high altar. The elaborate and somewhat bizarre triumphal car on which the reliquary is borne though the streets of Mons in procession on the saint's day is a prominent object in the vestibule of the church.

The fine stained glass in the windows, the work of the Eve family

Charleroi. — Old Houses on the Sambre.

in the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, represents scenes from the life of Christ, Maximilian of Austria, Mary of Burgundy, his wife, their two sons Philip the Fair and Francis, and their grandsons Charles and Ferdinand.

The impression made upon the mind of the visitor as a whole by this interesting and finely proportioned building, with its many points of interest, which there is no space to describe in detail, is one of considerable charm. It is well-lighted and, viewed from the west end, is impressive

Car of St. Waltruda.

The Belfry was erected in 1662 from designs of Louis Ledoux, and restored two centuries later by Sury.

Mons, as a town, has all the quaintness and

Charleroi. — Bridge over the Sambre.

added picturesqueness that always seems to distinguish places built on the sides of hills; the steeply ascending streets, some of steps, affording charming vistas of old-time houses and irregular and finely-coloured roofs.

Gradually as one leaves Mons behind one, set upon a hill which Caesar fortified, and glowing with a mysterious beauty given to it by the sunset, which catches the cupola of the lofty belfry, and paints it almost blood red, the Borinage begins to be replaced by the land of iron-workers and iron furnaces.

Formerly known as Charnoy, the centre of the south Belgian iron industry was renamed Charleroi in compliment to Charles II of Spain, who founded the ironworks. It, like Tournai, has been the scene of many sieges.

To-day its fame has been revived by the events of the few opening days of the War, when the 5th. French Army, under Lanrezac, defended the bridge-head of the Sambre hard by, and skirmishes took place amidst the iron works of the north eastern suburbs.

Though a somewhat uninteresting town, once again water saves the situation and the older houses overlooking the Sambre, on both

banks of which the town is built, give it an air of some picturesqueness, and afford some pleasant and even charming vistas.

The church of St. Antoine, with its two pictures by F. Navez; the always animated Place du Sud; the Palais de Justice on the Boulevard Audent; and the Hotel de Ville are the principal buildings, the rapidly flowing river, washing the walls of the older houses, providing an element of interest and beauty.

Panorama of Brussels.

CHAPTER V

Brussels, its Story, Romance, and Beauty. Waterloo and the Château of Hougoumont.

Brussels has not inaptly been called " the Little Paris ", and there is, indeed, much in the capital of Belgium, its brightness, beauty, and air of gaiety which reminds one of the greater capital by the Seine. To-day it is one of the pleasantest cities in which to dwell in the Spring and early Summer, and as a centre of Art and intellectual culture ranks high

It occupies an almost central position in Belgium; is pleasantly placed on the Senne, a tributary of the Dyle, much as is Paris upon the greater river Seine. Several quarters of the city are at a considerable elevation above sea level, as are Montmartre and Mont Parnasse in Paris; and beautiful parks and gardens, wide, clean streets, and spacious Boulevards are characteristics of both cities.

Like that of many another town of Northern Europe, the history

of Brussels is obscured by those mists of conflicting traditions and contradictory records which make the work of the historian so laborious and intricate.

Even the origin of the name itself is uncertain, some authorities inclining to the belief that it was derived from the two words *broek*, or *bruk*, a marsh, and *sele*, or *sel*, a dwelling or manor — literally a manor in the marsh.

But be this as it may, it is certain that in those dim and mysterious bygone ages, when out of the warring of contending barbarisms and semi-savage tribes, was gradually built up the institutions and towns which ultimately took concrete form in the Low Countries, Brussels was gradually evolved — a town of the Salic Franks, who for the greater part were the founders of the cities of the Province of Brabant, of which Brussels remains the chief.

Of the great men whose lives were bound up with that of the ancient settlement, and afterwards with the ever-growing city, we know very little. Some, indeed, are mere names handed down to us by tradition; others figure with a little more detail filled in, and with some clearness in the chronicles of those early times.

One of the most treasured names in the memories of the medieval

Brussels. — La Grande Place and the Flower Market.

inhabitants and one which has a very definite place among the saints and heroes of those far distant times, is that of St. Hubert, the great hunter Bishop of Liège, from about 707-727. He dwelt, we are told, in " a strong castle in the Forest of Soignes hard by Brussels, and when hunting there one day was confronted by a white stag, which bore, gleaming between its horns, a cross, emitting rays of effulgence ". This so impressed Hubert that he was at once converted to the Christian faith, and became fruitful in good works.

There remains no trace of St. Hubert's dwelling, but tradition asserts that in the royal park of Tervueren, the chapel known as that of St. Hubert marks the site, and the curious may care to know that in the parish church of the village (which is a famous resort of artists) hangs an ancient hunting-horn of ivory said to have belonged to the Saint.

The foundation of Brussels is generally supposed to have been during the vith century, and the founder, is, by tradition supposed to have been St. Géry, Bishop of Cambrai, by many considered the St. Augustine of Belgium. It was on an island of the Senne, amid what must have been extensive marshes, that the first dwellings were built. The records onward, however, are amazingly scant concerning this village, and it is not until the tenth century that one finds an authentic mention of it. Then, from a document of the reign of Otho the Great, one finds that there was a church here. Seldom, indeed, in ancient times was a group of houses placed on any spot without the accompaniment of a church, which in those troublous days was the symbol of some degree of law, order, and security for the weak.

A Canal near Brussels.

In the year 997, Duke Charles of Lorraine selected the village or townlet as his place of official

The Outskirts of Brussels.

residence, and shortly afterwards built a chateau on St. Géry's island.

It was under Duke Balderic that the first walled enclosure seems to have been built, which reached a little beyond the site of St. Gudule; and, continuing to the Rue d'Assaut, afterwards turned towards the present Boulevard Anspach, and climbed up the site of the Rue des Alexiens by the Rue d'Or, ultimately finishing a little below the site of the present Rue Royale.

This wall was about the year 1357 replaced by another having seven gates, and this was much strengthened during the first quarter of the XVIth century, and till the XIXth century continued to enclose Brussels proper.

The city had no very stirring or romantic history from the XIIth to the XIVth century. The town continued to grow, with fluctuations arising from fire, flood, and pestilence, and by the beginning of the latter century had become an important, and even prosperous place, and witnessed many stirring events.

The great commercial and material prosperity of the city however, dates from the beginning of the rule of the Dukes of Burgundy. It was then, in the XVth century, that the most beautiful of its many fine build-

Bois de la Cambre.

ings were erected. The Church of St. Michael and St. Gudule has its great nave and twin towers dating from this period; the Hôtel de Ville, Notre-Dame du Sablon, the Nassau Palace, the Palace of the Dukes of Brabant, and many other buildings were then begun. Manufactures and commerce commenced to flourish, while the liberties of the municipality were considerably extended.

From now onward indeed Brussels became accepted as the capital of the Belgian provinces, notwithstanding the importance both of Antwerp and Ghent. By degrees the Guilds, attained great power as they increased in numbers and wealth with the industrial and commercial prosperity of the city.

It was undoubtedly under the rule of Charles V that Brussels reached its zenith of ancient prosperity. Then with the era of Philip II of Spain, came a long period of bloodshed, persecution and misery. The religious disputes afflicting the Netherlands had their effect upon the life, prosperity, and happiness of the Bruxellois. The whole country was running with blood, and ruin stalked through the land. But amid all this misery Brussels can count some glorious deeds connected with the struggle for freedom and liberty which was going on all around it.

Brussels was through succeeding centuries often the " storm centre "

Brussels. — Porte de Hall.

Brussels. — Porte de Namur, Fontaine de Brouckère.

of Europe. In 1695 it was nearly destroyed by the inexcusable and useless bombardment to which the French, under Marshal Villeroi, subjected it. It was set on fire in many places, and only the most strenuous efforts of its inhabitants saved the city from total destruction.

The following century was also one during which the progress and peace of Brussels was often disturbed. From the middle of the XVIIIth century for a period of many years Belgium became the shuttlecock of French and Austrian pretensions.

During the succeeding years before the fall of Napoleon the city, in which the great Emperor stayed at Laeken several times for short periods, had an untroubled and almost stagnant existence. But by the Treâty of Vienna on September 28, 1814, when the erstwhile Austrian possessions and the Northern Provinces of the Low Countries were united so as to form the Kingdom of the Netherlands, under the rule of William of Orange, the prosperity and population of Brussels, the size of which had greatly decreased under the French Empire,

Brussels. — Square du Petit Sablon and Statues of Egmont and Horn.

improved

Then came the "National" movement and Revolution of 1830, which ultimately led to the separation of Belgium from Holland.

Brussels. — The Cinquantenaire.

Brussels was free!

From the beginning of the reign of Leopold I the city commenced to recover its lost position as one of the great trading and commercial centres of Northern Europe. It is to-day, beautiful, prosperous, and enterprising, endowed with a great historic past, and the promise of a bright commercial future.

The impression one is likely at first sight to receive of Brussels, the history of which has, of necessity, been but very briefly sketched, can be but confirmed upon closer acquaintance. We have seen the city under many different conditions of weather and season, and many times; and it still remains for us not alone a storehouse of Art and antiquarian treasures, but a picturesque and delightful place. Not merely "une p'tite Paris," but a charming capital with some very distinctive features.

Modern Brussels, with its present day population — including the suburbs and out-skirts — of upwards of three-quarters of a million, has now taken its place among the most beautiful and charming capital cities of Europe. There is, indeed, an engaging air about it which soon impresses a foreign visitor. Added to all its many attractions of interesting museums — the homes of wonderful and in some cases unrivalled collections of works of art — and of historical associations with the past it possesses the charm of being modern in the best sense of the word, and of being a place where one can find much that is finest in Art and, Music. As a home of fashion it ranks high, and the shops of the Montagne

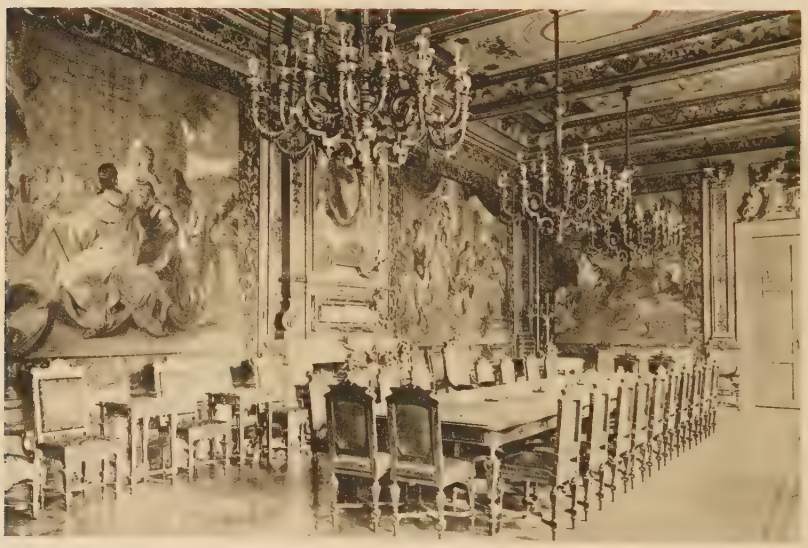
de la Cour, Boulevard Anspach, and the contiguous streets are scarcely less luxurious and exclusive than those of the Rue de la Paix or Boulevard des Italiens in the French capital.

Brussels is a city of shady boulevards, open spaces, and pleasant parks; and the beautiful Bois de la Cambre on its outskirts compares not unfavourably with the world-renowned Bois de Boulogne as regards rural charm and general picturesqueness.

One impression that Brussels is almost certain to make upon visitors is its compactness. Perhaps the explanation of this apparent lack of size is that there are in reality two cities, Brussels *interieur* and Brussels *exterieur*, the one with a population of approximately 200.000, and the latter with one of over half-a-million.

The most fashionable quarters for residences of the wealthy classes are the broad and beautiful Avenue Louise and the streets and Avenues of the Quartier Léopold which approximately correspond to the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, Avenue des Champs-Élysées, and the Boulevard Saint-Germain in Paris.

The last twenty or thirty years have seen many changes in Brussels. During that period the sluggish little River Senne, which once meandered



Brussels. — A Room in the Hôtel de Ville

Brussels. — Hôtel de Ville.

Brussels. — The Grande Place.

Brussels. — Place de Brouckère and the Anspach Monument.

through the city, and upon whose banks stood many fine and picturesque old houses and buildings of past ages, has been arched over, and the fine Boulevard de Senne, and those of Hainault and Anspach, have been built above its imprisoned waters. The higher portions of the city, with their outlook across the lower lying parts, are charming and healthy, and the climate of Brussels is less subject to extremes of variation in temperature than is that of Paris.

The city is one of fine buildings, and the Hotel de Ville is certainly one of the most graceful and interesting of its kind in Belgium. It is well-placed on one of the finest medieval squares in Europe, and is surrounded by quaint and historic

Brussels. — The Library.

houses. On this Grande Place from time to time many tragedies have been enacted, and some of the most ferocious acts of the inhuman Alva witnessed. In the spring of the terrible year 1568 no fewer than twenty-five Flemish nobles were executed here, and in the June of the same year the patriots, Count Egmont, and Count Hoorn were put to death.

This most beautiful Hotel de Ville, with its late Gothic façade, in date, approaching the Renaissance period, nearly 200 feet in length, and with a beautiful and elegant central tower 370 feet in height, was begun either in 1401 or 1402. The eastern wing, or left hand portion as one stands facing it across the Grande Place, having been the first to be commenced; the western half of the façade was not begun until 1444. The later additions formed the quadrangle. The name of the architect of this wonderful building has not been handed down to us, although it is generally accepted that it was Jacob van Thienen. The builder of the spire, however, is known. He was one Jan van Ruysbroek, and the tower was completed in 1454. The side of the open square, which runs parallel to the façade was the work of the XVIth century, and having been greatly damaged — as was also the portion of the building in the Rue Tête d'Or — during the bombardment of the city by Marshal Villeroi

in 1695, was reconstructed and rebuilt between the years 1707 and 1717.

The niches of the façade, one of which is occupied by a statue of Jan van Ruysbroek, were originally filled with statuary. This was destroyed by the French Republican forces in 1793, and the statues which took their place are of the Dukes of Brabant, and historical and other celebrities. The spire is surmounted by a colossal figure of the Archangel St. Michael overcoming the Devil, originally placed there in 1454. It was the work of Martin van Rode.

The two handsome fountains in the courtyard are emblematic of the Rivers Scheldt and Maas; the figures ornamenting them are those of river gods.

The interior of the building is of great interest. In the entrance corridor there are several large canvases by Joseph Stallaërt of Merchtem, one of which, worthy of special note, depicts " The Death of Everard T' Serclaes ", one of the most popular citizen-heroes in the history of Brussels, The lavish and elaborate decorations of the Salle du Conseil Communal are so beautiful and ornate as to remind one of those of some of the more noted Venetian palaces. The ceiling paintings, by Victor Janssens, dating from the early part of the XVIIIth century, are chiefly remarkable for the wonderful effectiveness of the perspective.

Scarcely a room in this beautiful and historic building but contains some treasure of art which tempts not alone the student, but even the casual visitor, to linger. In the Salle Maximilian there is a triptych, by an unknown Belgian artist, of surpassing interest. It dates from the XVth century, and was acquired only a quarter of a century ago. It has for its subject scenes from the life of the Virgin, and is of the greatest interest to all who are versed in Flemish Art, and its development from the earliest times until its zenith.

Interesting as are the Council Chamber, in which many historic scenes have been enacted in the past; the Salle de Collège, in which the

Provisional Government held its sittings after the Revolution of 1830; and the large Salle Gothique or Salle des Fêtes, the almost complete modernisation of all the rooms has robbed them of much of the charm of antiquity.

Brussels. — La Grande Place : Maison du Roi.

Opposite the Hotel de Ville stands the famous Maison du Roi, or Broodhuis (Bread House), on the site of an XIth century building, which was occupied as a residence towards the middle of the XIIth century by Pope Innocent II and St. Bernard. The present building dates from 1514 onwards for a period of years, and the style of its architecture is largely transition from the Late Gothic to the Renaissance. It was rebuilt according to the original plan in the latter half of the last century, and was, finally towards the end of the century taken over by the municipal authorities. It now houses the Musée Communal.

Most of the other Guild Houses, which form so picturesque and interesting a feature of this fine Grande Place, date from the end of the XVIIth century, one of the quaintest is that known as " La Frégate ", or " Hall of the Sea Captains ", the gable of which has been constructed in the form of the stern of a large vessel of the XVIIth century. Of the really

The Colonne du Congrès.

ancient houses, the most interesting is that known as the " Pigeon ", or " Hall of the Painters ", standing on the north-east side of the Place. It was built in 1537, and fortunately escaped any serious damage at the time of the bombardment.

These are, after all, but a selection of the picturesque buildings, with their lavish exterior decorations and g lding, which give such a medieval atmosphere and appearance to this historic spot.

Few tourists, we imagine, from the crowds we have seen and what Belgian friends have told us fail to go in search of the " Mannikin " Fountain of Duquesnoy. The figure of the " mannikin " is of greater artistic merit than might be supposed. It is a popular idol, immensely beloved by the lower classes, who deck it with flowers and ribbons on gala occasions, when it is also dressed up in the special clothes kept for the purpose in the Museum of the Maison du Roi.

The Cathedral, the great church of Brussels is jointly dedicated to St. Michael and St. Gudule. The latter is one of the luckiest Saints in this respect; as, probably, but for this dedication she would have remained amongst the many rather obscure saints of the early periods of Christianity. She was a great niece of Pepin of Landen, a kinsman of Charlemagne, a daughter of St .Amalberga, and was educated by St. Ger-

trude, her godmother at Nivelles. It was not until the year 1047 that Lambert, Count of Louvain, commenced to build a church on the present site of St. Gudule above the body of the saint, still reposing in the church of to-day, which in the year 1220 took the place of the small original building.

It is to this church that most visitors to Brussels wend their way after seeing the Grande Place and its delightful flower market, which is gay with blossoms most days of the week, nearly all the year round. The natural situation of the church is a fine one, a circumstance made the most of by its architects and builders of long ago. Standing as it does on the side of a hill, reached from the Grande Place by the fine Rue de la Montagne, and short, steep, Rue Ste-Gudule, it stands overlooking the city with its two massive, twin, western towers dominating the neighbouring streets. These two towers, when viewed up the Rue Ste. Gudule, and from other streets leading to the church, often appear half-veiled in an ambient haze, and gain much in impressiveness and grandeur from the *coup d'œil* one obtains of them framed, as it were, by the end of the rising street.

Hôtel de Ville : The Lion Staircase.

The two towers, which are generally stated to have been built in 1518, and are 226 feet in height, are supposed by some to have originally possessed elegant spires, but this appears doubtful, and there is no real evidence to support this view. There is a doorway in front of each, opening

Brussels. — The Stock Exchange.

into the aisles, and in the centre of the façade is a double doorway leading into the fine and impressive nave.

Perhaps the best side of the church is the south, which is particularly worth study by reason of the great picturesqueness and charm which is given to it by the range of side chapels.

The western windows of the choir, and the severely designed buttresses between them, give an impressive effect to this portion of the exterior, which dates from about 1273. The exterior of the eastern end is very beautiful, but the charming general effect is somewhat spoiled by the presence of an ugly little hexagonal chapel dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene, dating from the latter half of the XVIIth century.

The immense lateral chapels of the choir are late additions. The one on the north is dedicated to the St. Sacrament des Miracles. It was so dedicated to commemorate the events which followed the stealing of some of the wafers of the Host by a Jew in the middle of the XIVth century. The gruesome medieval legend connected with the incident, is to be traced in the glass of the large windows of the chapel, which also contain the portraits of the Royal donors, King John III of Portugal,

Brussels. — St. Gudule.

Louis of Hungary, Francis I of France, Ferdinand of Austria, and their wives and patron saints.

It cannot be said that the interior of St. Gudule as a whole comes up to the expectations which are aroused by the impressive, and, from many points, beautiful exterior. But it is not without nobility, notwithstanding the paint and none too wise restorations in places.

Brussels. — St. Gudule.

There is one feature of St. Gudule that is world-famed, the exquisite stained glass; which, although with the exceptions of a few fragments is not medieval, but comparatively modern, is extremely beautiful in design and colouring. The best of the windows date from the XVIIth century, and are indeed exquisite.

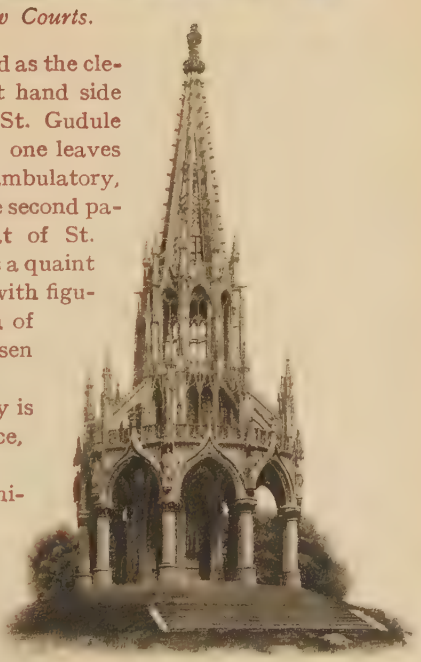
A fine view point from which to realize the church is just inside the main door. From here one obtains an impressive vista of the high choir, its apse, and the fully developed and graceful Early Gothic triforium. The clerestory has six lights with rich and varied geometrical heads of tracery which are restorations. This very interesting portion of the building dates from about 1518. The south end of the transept, and a part of that of the north are of contemporary date with the choir; that is to say, about 1273. The bases of the vaulting in the nave should be particularly noted, as they are richer than is usually found in Belgian

Brussels. — The Law Courts.

churches. The roof is about the same period as the clerestory. The choir ambulatory on the left hand side of the church contains a large figure of St. Gudule trampling the Devil beneath her feet. As one leaves the apse, having made the circuit of the ambulatory, one finds a gilded statue of St. Michael, the second patron saint of the church, balancing that of St. Gudule on the other side. Close to it there is a quaint and interesting wooden Easter Sepulchre, with figures of the Virgin, the two Marys, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, with the risen Christ above, and Roman soldiers below.

On the southern side of the ambulatory is the chapel of Notre-Dame de Déliverance, which was built from 1649-63.

The church relies, apart from its architecture, largely for interest upon its stained glass. It possesses few paintings, and none of particular note or value. There



Brussels. — Monument to Leopold I.

Brussels. — Palais de la Nation.

are, however, some interesting and valuable pieces of tapestry, the work of Van der Borght, dating from the end of the XVIIIth century; the subject of which is the story of the Miraculous Wafers.

The pulpit, originally in the Church of the Jesuits at Louvain, is by most critics of the art of pulpit making and wood carving considered "a horrible monstrosity in the worst possible taste of a tasteless period". The subject of the carving is the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, and although the carving is bewilderingly elaborate in its details it represents much skilful work, is greatly admired by most unlearned and non-critical observers, and is famous.

There are some relics of note, including one of the largest known portions of the True Cross.

Close to the University, and a little way southward of St. Gudule stands the interesting Gothic Church of Notre-Dame de la Chapelle, founded it is said by Godefroi-le-Barbu, Duke of Brabant, about the year 1134. Once this chapel stood outside the walls of Brussels, and was in the patronage of the famous Abbey of St. Sepulchre of Cambrai. It was early in the XIIIth century raised to the status of a parish church, and about 1216 the existing choir and transept were built. The student

Brussels. — Palais du Roi.

of architecture will find in this church an interesting example of the Transitional and Early Pointed Periods of architecture, of which so few specimens are left in the churches of Brabant. In it one can trace the Romanesque, First Pointed and, in the nave, some very good XVth century work.

The interior of the church is distinctly pleasing, elegant and spacious; and the unusually handsome clusters of shafts form the piers supporting the arch opening to the full height of the building into the nave from the tower, producing a particularly noble effect when seen from a distance at the east end.

A Corner of Old Brussels.

The other me-

dieval church of any considerable interest is Notre-Dame des Victoires du Sablon, which is easily reached from Notre-Dame de la Chapelle by the Rue Montagne de la Cour, Place Royale, and the fine Rue de la Régence.

It is a well-isolated Late Gothic Building, standing on the site of an old and small chapel erected in the first years of the XIVth century by the Corporation of Archers or Crossbowmen in commemoration of the Battle of Woeringen, at which Duke John I of Brabant gained a signal victory over the Count of Guelders and the Archbishop of Cologne.

Notable features of this church are the handsome and deeply recessed western portal, and the most beautiful traceried window above it. In the rose window of the south transept we have a rare feature in the architecture of Belgian churches. The southern porch below is the most ancient part of the building, and dates from about 1410. The lofty choir is particularly impressive; it terminates in a five-sided apse, and possesses no aisles. It should be noted that this church is one of the few in Belgium — and this serves to make it of especial interest to the student of architecture — planned with double aisles to each side of the nave.

Brussels. — Old Houses near the Docks.

Among the small details which one may well notice is the *ex voto*, in the form of a ship, placed over the inside of the main entrance in commemoration of a sacred image, which, it is said, miraculously floated ashore when lost at sea; the partially restored tomb of Count Flamino Garnier, secretary to the Duke of Parma, with a series of fine alabaster

The Brussels Gallery. — Jordaens : Le Roi boit (Detail).

Renaissance reliefs, depicting the history of the Virgin; the fine modern stained glass; and in the right transept, on the threshold of the sacristy door, an inscribed stone marking the resting place of Rousseau the French poet, who died at Genette, near Brussels, in 1741.

Although, as may well be imagined, there are several other churches of interest, and many others of little note in Brussels there are none which need claim the attention of any visitor other than the ardent archaeologist, or serious and learned student of architecture. Of those which deserve the attention of the latter may be mentioned St-Jacques-sur-Caudenberg, formerly the Abbey church of the old Augustinian foundation, and the state church of the Spanish Governors; and the Église du Béguinage, dating from 1657, and erected, it is supposed, from designs by Lucas Faid'herbe, containing several good pictures by De Crayer, Otho Vaenius and others.

The Palais du Roi, standing on the southern side of a beautiful park, in which there is a theatre, „ Vauxhall " garden, ponds, and tree-shaded walks, occupies the site of the castle of the Dukes of Brabant and the Spanish Governors, which was burned down in 1731. On Summer evenings the park is crowded by throngs of happy Brussels *bourgeois* and their families, intent on taking the air and enjoying the scenes of gaiety

The Brussels Gallery. — Teniers ; La Kermesse (Detail).

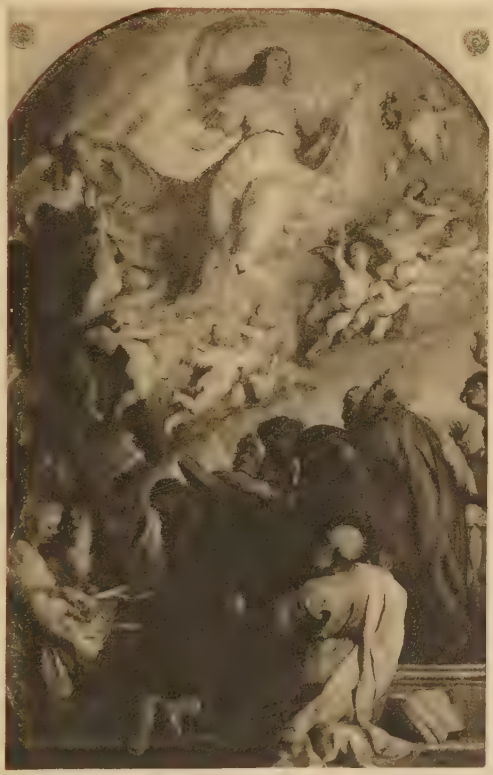
around them. The interior of the Palace is a treasure house of beautiful pictures, furniture, and bric-à-brac, and is well-worth seeing if permission can be obtained. Quite close by is the Palais des Académies, over-looking the south eastern corner of the Park, since the middle of the XIXth century it has been the home of the Royal Academies of Sciences, Letters, Fine Arts and Medicine, all of which possess valuable and interesting libraries.

One finds the principal Government Offices at the opposite end of the Park, on the Place de la Nation, including the Palais de la Nation, built in 1779-83 from designs by Guimard the famous Brussels architect, for the use of the old Council of Brabant. Since the Revolution of 1831 and the formation of Belgium into a separate kingdom, it has served for the purposes of the Belgian Senate and Chamber of Deputies.

The imposing Palais de Justice, occupies a dominating position overlooking the whole of Brussels upon the Place Pœlaert, named in

honour of the architect of these magnificent Law Courts, on which the immense sum of frs 50.000.000 (in those days £ 2.000,000) was expended. The building covers a greater area than that of St. Peter's, Rome, and is 590 feet in length by 560 feet in depth. It is surmounted by a cupola, which is supported by colossal figures of Justice, Law Power and Clemency.

From the terrace of the Place Poelaert one obtains, perhaps, what is the most extensive view over Brussels. Beneath one stretch acres and acres of irregular and picturesque roofs, and seen at sunset, when there is often an opalescent haze hanging over the city, the prospect spread out before the observer is, indeed, an enchanting one.



The Brussels Gallery. — Rubens : The Assumption.

At the northern end of the Rue aux Laines, near the Place du Petit Sablon, stands the Palace of the Duc d'Arenberg. The collection of pictures now housed here is an important and admirable one They are mostly XVIIth century works by Dutch and Flemish masters. Among the artists represented may be mentioned David Teniers the Younger, P. Wouverman, J. Van Craesbeek, Adrian Van Ostade, W. Van der Velde the Younger, David Teniers the Elder, G. Terburg, Watteau, A. Van Dyck, and Paul Potter. There are also in the Palace some interesting printed books and manuscripts.

The art treasures of Brussels are world famous. The chief collections, are to be found in the Musée Royal de Peinture Ancienne et de Sculpture;

Flemish Oyster Boat.

in the handsome Palais des Beaux-Arts; the Musée Moderne de Peinture, in the Ancien Cour, once the residence of the Austrian Stadtholders of the Netherlands, adjoining the Royal Library; the Musées Royaux des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels, and the Musée d'Antiquités et d'Armures, erected in 1381, and used by the Duke of Alva as the Belgian Bastille, which has had its oldworld vaulted chambers skilfully adapted for the purposes of a Museum.

These one and all contain priceless treasures which no student or connoisseur of Art can afford to overlook, but which it would need a volume to describe. It may be stated, however, that the galleries of the Palais des Beaux-Arts are particularly rich in the works of the old Flemish masters, including some by Roger van der Weyden, Memlinc's master; and Dierick Bouts; in those of the schools of the transitional period of Flemish and Dutch art, down to the third great period of Rubens, and his notable successors, Rembrandt, Franz Hals, Gerard Dow, the Teniers, and others.

There are, of course, many other interesting buildings and things in this bright and beautiful capital. The wanderer with leisure will be able to indulge in that most delightful pastime of discovering these for himself. For example the old way up to the Place Royale by the Rue de la Madeleine, and the steeply climbing Montagne de la Cour

takes one past a portion of the house ocupied by William the Silent, dating from 1516, now used by a branch of the Office de la Bibliographie. The terraced garden between the Montagne de la Cour and the Rue Coudenberg is a favourite spot from which to obtain a panoramic view over the city, and not far below lies the Université Libre, founded, in 1835, in the mansion of Cardinal Granvella, and higher up is the xvth century Hotel Ravenstein. Down by the docks and quais, too, are to be found old houses of the xvith and xviith centuries, and others of the older buildings, with much of the picturesque interest usually associated with quarters of cities where there is a waterside district.

In the upper town, in the Quartier Léopold, is the Palais du Roi, a fine building dating from 1740-1827 but entirely altered in 1904-12 from plans by Maquet. There are beautiful gardens behind the Palace, the situation of which, looking out on to the Park once a portion of the Forêt de Soignes across the Place des Palais, is charming.

Brussels posseses several good theatres, the principal of which is the Theatre Royal de la Monnaie, on the Place of the same name opposite the General Post Office, a fine though modern building. The theatre is an Opera House of high musical repute, and has historic interest in that

La Haye Sainte.

it was within it that the signal for the Revolution of 1830 was given during the performance of Aubert's " La Muette de Portici ".

On the outskirts of Brussels there is much of picturesque charm, and a day spent in the beautiful Forêt de Soignes, which stretches to the S. E. of the city, is a charming experience. Soignes is almost as famous with the Bruxellois for its beeches as is Burnham with Londoners, or Bushey for its chestnuts.

Nine miles or so South of Brussels is the Battle field of Waterloo, an undulating district now chiefly rich corn fields, the height of whose grain seldom, we fancy, fails to arouse the astonishement of visitors.

One of the great decisive battles of the world, Waterloo, will never lose its glamour or historical importance. Waterloo, the village 3 miles north of the battlefield, was Wellington's headquarters, from whence he wrote the dispatch announcing his victory. The house opposite the church is that in which he spent the night of June 17th. 1815. The next village to that of Waterloo is Mont St-Jean. Here, in the the Hotel des Colonnes, Victor Hugo is stated to have written the chapter in „ Les Misérables " dealing with the Battle.

The picturesque, white-walled Ferme St-Jean, is much as it was in 1815, it was used as a dressing station during the conflict, as it was conve-

Waterloo. Monument du Lion.

niently situated for such a purpose immediately behind the centre of the British line. It is possible to-day, if one is in possession of a good map, to trace the outlines of the battlefield, and the movements of the contending forces. The farm of La Haye Sainte is on the forward slope of the plateau, and formed an advance work in the centre of the Allies position, it was stormed by the French after a splendid and sustained defence. It is possible that most of the domestic buildings of to-day are reconstructions, but making allowance for reconstructions and necessary repairs the buildings are as a whole very much as they were a century and a half ago.

Hougoumont is the Mecca of many pilgrims to the field of Waterloo; but perhaps its true spirit — though all are lured by its romance — its atmosphere, its consuming interest, is only revealed in full to those who have closely studied its history, and who know its tragic and gallant story.

Its picturesqueness alone makes it alluring. Of the original, and at the time of the battle very considerable, Chateau, or manorial farm-house there is not — owing to its having caught fire during the late afternoon of the fight — a great deal remaning. A portion of the house near the

wide main gateway or entrance; a few of the outbuildings; a fragment of the chapel; the wall surrounding the Chateau; and that of the garden behind which the brave defenders lay, are nearly all.

What remains of the buildings, including the ruined chapel with its smoke-discoloured walls and crucifix in a wire-netting cage, bear many traces of the memorable siege, and the fierce fighting which here took place.

During the day of battle it is estimated that not many fewer than 15,000 men were engaged in the repeated attempts to capture the Chateau. Several times the French gained access to the orchards and outlying parts of the farm buildings, but failed to carry the main portion of the Chateau. The loopholes, made by direction of Wellington himself, in the garden walls can still some of them be seen, as can also bullet and cannon-ball marks.

One leaves Brussels, with its great traditions going back into those days when the world was young, chivalry was in flower, and some of the most exquisite things ever wrought in the world were brought into being, with regret; and with an ineffacable memory of beautiful and intriguing things, and perhaps even some slight knowledge and understanding of the soul of a great and alluring capital.

Brussels Lace. XVI century.

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